

A Τ Τ Α Ρ Κ Ε Ι Α;
OR THE
A R T
OF DIVINE
CONTENTMENT.

B Y
T H O M A S W A T S O N,
Pastour of *Stephens Walbrook.*
L O N D O N.

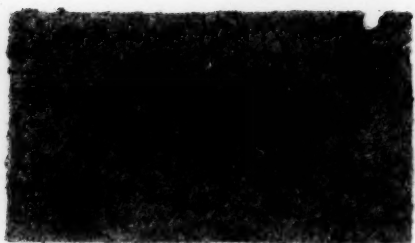
The Thirteenth Edition.

1 Tim. 6. 6.

Godliness with Contentment is great gain.

Κεφάλαιος πέμπτος. ἔστι δὲ συντηδὸν ὅντα συμφορὰς. Eurip.
Beatus est qui suis contentus est. Sen.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Ralph Smith*, at the Sign of the Bible
in the Piazza of the *Royal Exchange* in
Cornhill, 1 6 7 2.







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his hoarhon to 600 d. 600 d. 600 d.
& d. 600 d. hoarhon pa: 209

R. Nellings
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1578/1608

~~1606/1444~~

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THE BIBLE

AND THE

NEW TESTAMENT

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT

WITH A

NEW TRANSLATION

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT

AND THE

NEW TESTAMENT

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT



22
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ac
of
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in



THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader,

HAving seriously considered the great dishonours done to Almighty God (as well as the prejudice which doth accrue to our own selves, by the sin of discontent (a catholick and epidemical sin *), it did at first put me upon the study of this subject. Nor is it incongruous to handle this next in order to the *Christian Charter*. I

** In statu maxime queralo & moroso po. I si summo San.*

A 3 shewed

The Epistle

shewed you *there* the great things which a Believer hath in reversion, *Things to come are his*: And here, behold a Christians holy and gracious deportment in this life, which discovers it self in nothing more eminently than in *Contentation*. Discontent is to the soul, as a disease to the body *; it puts it out of temper, and doth much hinder its regular and sublime motions heaven-ward. Discontent is hereditary, and no doubt but it is much augmented by the many sad eclipses and changes that have fallen out of late in the Body Politick; yet the disease is not to be pleaded for, because natural; but to be resisted, because sinful. That which should make us out of love with this sullen distemper, is the contemplating the beautiful Queen of *Contentment* *. For my part, I know not any ornament in Religion that doth more bespangle a Christian, or glitter in the eye of God and Man, than

* *Est animi agritudo.* Cic. Tasc.

* *Contraria juxta se posita,* &c.

to the Reader.

than this of contentment: Nor certainly is there any thing wherein all the Christian Virtues do work more harmoniously, or shine more transparently, than in this Orb. Every Grace doth act its part here, and help to keep the Soul in its *vigilia*: This is the true Philosophers stone, which turns all into gold: This is the curious enamel and embroidery of the heart, which makes Christs Spouse all *glorious* within. How should every Christian be ambitious to wear such a sparkling Diamond! If there be a blessed life before we come at Heaven, it is the contented life. And why not contented? *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen**? Man of all Creatures, hath the least cause to be discontented. Canst thou deserve any thing from God? doth he owe thee any thing? What if the Scene turn, and God puts thee under the *Black-Rod*? Whereas he useth a Rod, he

Gen. 4.6.

A 4

might

: *The Epistle*

might use a Scorpion ; he might as well damn thee, as whip thee : Why then art thou so querulous ? why dost thou give way to this irrational and unthankful sin of discontent ? The good Lord humble his own people from nourishing such a Viper in their breast, as doth not only cut out the bowels of their comfort ; but spits venom in the face of God himself. Oh Christian, who art overspread with this *fretting leprosie*, thou carriest the *man of sin* about thee ; for thou settest thy self above God ; and as if thou wert wiser than he, wouldst saucily prescribe him what condition is best for thee. O this *devil of discontent*, which whomsoever it possesseth, it makes his heart a little Hell * ! I know there will not be perfect contentment here in this life *, *ἐν τούτῳ κόσμῳ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀσφάλεια*, Perfect pleasure is only at *Gods right hand* * ; yet we may begin here to tune our Instrument, before we play the

* *ταπεινὸν*
joy, exin.
ταπεινός.
** Amplifi-*
ma quaque
letitia sub-
fit quapi-
am vel
parva que-
rimonia,
Luc. Apul.
Florid. l. 2.
** Ps. 16. 11,*

to the Reader.

the sweet lesson of contentment exactly in Heaven. I should be glad if this little piece might be like *Moses* his casting the tree into the waters* * Exod. 15.25. to make the uncouth bitter condition of life more sweet and pleasant to drink of. I have once more adventured into the publick; *this* I acknowledge to be *rudi Minervâ*, home-spun; some better hand might have made a more curious draught; but having preached upon the subject, I was earnestly solicited by some of my Hearers to publish it; and although it is not drest in that rich attire of eloquence as it might, yet I am not about Poetry or Oratory, but Divinity; nor is this intended for fancy, but Practice. If I may herein do any service, or cast but a mite into the Treasury of the Churches Grace, I have my desire. The end of our living is to live to God, and to lift up his Name in the word *. The Lord add an effectual blessing

**Nihil turpius est quam grandis natu senex, qui nullum aliud habet argumentum quo probet se diu vixisse, præter ætatem. Seneca de Tranquill.*

The Epistle to the Reader.

bleſſing to this work, and faſten it as
a nail in a ſure place: He of his mer-
cy make it as ſpiritual Phyſick, to
purge the ill humour of diſcontent
out of our hearts, that ſo a Crown
of Honour may be ſet upon the head
of Religion, and the chryſtal ſtreams
of Joy and Peace may ever run in
our Souls: which is the Prayer of him
who is deſirous to be a faithful Ora-
tor for thee at the Throne of Grace,

From my Study at
Stephens Walbrook,
May 5. 1653.

Thomas Watſon.

TO



TO THE
Christian Reader.

A Word spoken in due season,
how good is it*? *As God gi- *Prov. 15.
veth to his Creatures their 13.
meat in season*, so his faith- *Psal. 104
ful stewards provide for his 27.
household their portion of
meat in due season*. And as it is with cor- *Luke 2.
poral food, the season addeth much both to the 42.
value and usefulness thereof; in like manner
it is with food spiritual: In this regard the
brokenness of these times (wherein the bosoms
of most people are filled with disquiets, & their
mouths with murmurings) may well render
this Treatise the more acceptable. The Seas
are not so stormy as mens spirits are tempe-
stuous, tossed to and fro with discontents. And
now the Lord (who maketh every thing Eccl. 3. 11.
beautiful in his time) hath most opportunely
put into thy hand a profitable discourse to calm
unquiet hearts. Adam in Paradise dashed upon
the Rock of discontent (which some Divines
conceive was his first sin.) This, with many in-
stances more in Scripture, together with our
own*

To the Christian Reader.

own sad experience, doth both speak our danger and call for caution. Now godliness is the only sovereign antidote against this spreading disease; and Gods grace alone (being settled and exercised in the heart) can cause steadiness in

** Heb. 13. stormy times*. Whereas, contentation ariseth either from the fruition of all comforts, or from a not desiring of some which we have*

** Dr. Hall. not*. True piety doth put a Christian into such a condition: Hereby we both possess God, and are taught how to improve him, who is the only satisfying everlasting portion of his people*.*

** Psal. 16. Herein Christ (though poor in this world) greatly rejoiced, The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, the lines are*

** Psal. 73. fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage: Upon this account*

also Jacob said I have nothing; or, as it is in the original, I have all, God the Father and Christ his Son had sweet satisfaction in each other, when there was no other Being*; there-*

fore such who possess and improve God through Christ, cannot possibly be dissatisfied. The

** Gen. 33. Almighty is the God of all grace*, of all comforts*, and of salvations*; in which*

** Prov. 8. respect neither deficiencies or disappointments, losses or crosses, can cause disquieting discon-*

** 2 Cor. 1. tents in that bosom where Faith is Commander in chief. The Prophet Habakkuk re-*

joiced in the God of his salvation, when the pestilence

To the Christian Reader.

pestilence went before him *, and burning ^{* Heb. 3. 4.} coals came forth of his feet, and when he ^{* 17. 11.} posed all creature-succours, both for delight & necessity, to be quite removed. This, this is the life which Christians should endeavour, and may attain by the vigorous regular actings of precious faith. This is the gain of Contentment, which comes in by godliness, when providences are black and likely to be bloody, now, the just shall live by his faith*. That speech of ^{* Hab. 2. 4:} learned M. Gataker is weighty, and well worth ^{Heb. 10.} the marking, A contented mind argues a religious heart, and a discontented mind argues an irreligious heart. And that worthy Divine Mr. Greenham was bold to say, They never felt Gods love, or tasted forgiveness of sins, who are discontented. This likewise was an holy breathing of Reverend Dr. Hall in his Meditations, I have somewhat of the best things; I will with thankfulness enjoy them, and will want the rest with contentment. By attaining and maintaining this ^{* Dives est qui suā sorte gaudet; animus est potissimum qui divites facit. Sen. Pro. 17.} frame of heart, we might have much of heaven on this side heaven. Holy contentment maketh them truly rich, whom the oppressing world maketh very poor*. Hereby our sweetest morsels shall be well seasoned, and our bitterest potions well sweetn'd*. Had we learn'd to enjoy contentment in Jehovah, who is immutable and all-sufficient, this heavenly frame of spirit should

To the Christian Reader.

Nihil tam
acerbum
est, in quo
non æquus
animus
folatium
inveniat.

Idem.

* 1 Sam.

25. 37.

* Beatus
est qui
quæ non
habet, non
cupit. *Aug.*
Omnia ha-
bet, qui
nihil con-
cupiscit.
Sen.

* Gen. 28.

20.

Pro. 30. 8.

1 Tim. 6. 7.

should never perish or change in the midst of the most amazing alterations in Church & State with which his Majesty is pleased to exercise us: whereas, because we live alone upon sublu-
naries, therefore we are apt with Nabal to die upon the nest *, through dejectedness, upon the approach of Imagined dangers. When God seeth cause to cut us short of many creatures accomodations, Faith wil moderate our desires after them, assuring the soul that nothing is withdrawn or with-held which might be really advantagious: and doubtless it is a great piece of happiness upon earth, not to long after that which the Lord is pleased to deny. In-
deed men act rather like Heathens than Chri-
stians, when they fret upon some particular in-
ferior disappointments, notwithstanding Gods
liberality laid forth upon them in many other
respects: As Alexander the Monarch of the
world was discontented, because Ivy would not
grow in his gardens at Babylon. Diogenes
the Cynick was herein more wise, who finding
a mouse in his Sachel, said, He saw that him-
self was not so poor, but some were glad of
his leavings. Oh how might we (if we had
hearts to improve higher providences) rock our
peevish spirits quiet by much stronger argu-
ments! Let us then lay before our eyes the pra-
ctices of pious men, recorded in Scripture for
our imitation, as Jacob, Agur, Paul, &c. and

12:

To the Christian Reader.

Let us charge home upon our consciences divine exhortations, backed with strong reasons, and encouraged with sweet promises. It was the grave counsel of holy Greenham, Having food and raiment, take the rest as an over-plus. Are we not less than the least of Gods mercies? *Gen. 32. 10.* Is not God our bountiful benefactor? Why then do we not rest contented with his liberal allowance? Ob let us chide our wrangling spirits, and encourage confidence with contentment in God, as blessed David did. *Psal. 43. 5.* My pen hath outrun my purpose when I undertook this Preface; but I will no longer (good Reader) detain thee in the Porch, wherein I have designed to quicken and to prepare thee to the more fruitful improvement of this seasonable useful Treatise, wherein the Author hath exercised to good purpose both the Christian graces and Ministerial gifts with which God hath enriched him. Herein the Doctrine of Christian Contentment is clearly illustrated, and profitably applied; the special cases (wherein through change of providences discontents are most commonly occasioned) are particularized, & preservatives applied to secure the soul. Although some other worthy Divines have been helpful to the Church of God by their discourses upon this subject; yet there is much of peculiar use in this Treatise. The Apostle tells us that some manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man

To the Christian Reader.

man to profit withal *. Thy soul-profit is
propounded as the Authors end in publishing
this Piece: and that this end may be accom-
plished, is the unfeigned desire and hearty
prayer of him, who is

Thy Servant in and for Christ,

May 3. 1653.

Simeon Ashe.



THE

the
gra



The Art of Divine Contentment.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction of the Text.

Phil. 4. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever state
I am, therewith to be content.*

THese words are brought
in by way of *Prolepsis*,
to anticipate and pre-
vent an Objection.

The Apostle had in
the former Verses laid down many
grave and heavenly Exhortations;

B

among

among the rest; to be careful for nothing, Verse 6. Not to exclude

* *Neque enim prohibetur, quod homo de rebus in posterum necessariis non sollicitetur. Aquin. in Heb. 13. 1 Tim. 5. 8.*

1. A prudential care*: For He that provideth not for his own house hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel. Nor 2. A Religious care: For, we must give all

diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*. But 3. To exclude all* anxious care about

* 2 Pet. 1. 10.

Jubet Apostolus, ut deponatur anxia cura quod illa non nisi ex infidelitate profiscatur. Zanch.

* Mat. 6. 25.

the issues and events of things; Take no thought for your life what you shall eat*; and in this sense it should be

a Christians care not to be careful. The word in the Greek

[Careful] comes from a primitive, * that signifies, To

* Dicitur μεμενῶν πνεῦ το μελίζον *
רעו.

cut the heart in pieces; a soul-dividing Care; take heed of this. We are bid to

* Pl. 37. 5. commit* our way unto the Lord: the Hebrew word is, Roll* thy way upon the Lord. It is our work to cast

care,



care *, and it is Gods work to take * Pct. 9. 7.
care. By our immoderacy we take
his work out of his hand.

Care when it is *excentrick*, either
distrustful, or distracting, is very
dishonourable to God; it takes away
his providence, as if he sate in hea-
ven, and minded not what became
of things here below; like a man
that makes a Clock, and then leaves
it to go of it self. Immoderate
care takes the heart off from better
things; and usually while we are
thinking how we shall do to live, we
forget how to die. *Curis tabescimus*
omnes. --- Care is a spiritual Can-
ker; that doth waste and dispirit;
& *cui bono?* we may sooner by
our care add a *furlong* to our grief,
than a *cubit* to our comfort. God
doth threaten it as a curse, *They shall*
eat their bread with carefulness *: * Ezek.
better fast, than eat of that bread. 12. 19.
Be careful for nothing.

Now lest any one should say,

yea, *Paul*, thou preacheſt that to us which thou haſt ſcarce learned thy ſelf; Haſt thou learned not to be careful? The Apoſtle ſeems tacitely to answer that, in the words of the Text; *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

Egregia Sententia! A ſpeech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to be written in letters of Gold upon the Crowns and Diadems of Princes. The Text doth branch it ſelf into theſe two general Parts.

I. The Scholar, *Paul*: *I have learned.*

II. The Leſſon: *In every ſtate to be content.*

CHAP. II.

The first branch of the Text, The Scholar; with the first Proposition.

I Begin with the first. I. The Scholar, and his proficiency; *I have learned*: Out of which I shall *in transitu* observe two things by way of paraphrase.

I. It is not *ἐκείνα* but *ἐμαθον*. The *1. Observ.* Apostle doth not say, I have *heard*, *ἐμαθον*, it is a Practick word. that in every state I should be content; but, I have *learned*; Whence

Doctr. I. It is not enough for Christians to hear their Duty, but they must learn their duty. *Doctr. 1.*

It is one thing to hear, and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. St. Paul was a Practitioner

tioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There were four sorts of ground in the parable *, and but one good ground.

*Luk. 8. 5. An emblem of this truth ; many *Hearers*, but few *Learners*. There are two things which keep us from learning.

I. *Slighting what we hear*. Christ is the *Pearl of price*: when we disesteem this Pearl, we shall never learn, either its value, or its virtue. The Gospel is a rare Mystery ; in one place it is called the

*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
τῆς χάριτος
τῆς ἀγάπης
20. 24.
*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
τῆς δόξης
1 Cor: 4. 4.
* *Gospel of Grace* ; in another, * *the Gospel of Glory*, because in it, as in a transparent Glass, the Glory of God is resplendent : But, he that hath learned to contemn this Mystery, will hardly ever learn to obey it. He that looks upon the things of Heaven, as things by the by ; and perhaps the driving of a trade, or carrying on some Politick design, to be of greater importance, this

this man is in the high-road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of his peace: who will learn that which he thinks is scarce worth learning?

2. *Forgetting what we hear* *. If a Scholar have his Rules laid before him, and he forgets them as fast as he reads them, he will never learn. *Tantum scimus quantum in memoria tenemus.* *Aristotle* calls the Memory, the scribe of the Soul; and *Bernard* calls it the *stomach* of the Soul, because it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits. We have great memories in other things; we remember that which is *vain*. *Cyrus* could remember the name of every Souldier in his huge Army; we remember *injuries* *. This is to fill a pretious Cabinet with Dung; but *quàm facilis obliuio boni?* as *Hierom* saith, ** Scribit in marmore laesus Cic.* how soon do we forget the sacred truths of God? We are apt to forget three things, our *faults*, our
B 4 friends,

2.
Tantum
scimus
quantum
in memoria
tenemus.
Plato in
Timæo.
* Jam. i.
25.

* Scribit in
marmore
laesus Cic.
l. 2. de
Orat.

friends, our *instructions*. Many Christians are like Sieves; put a Sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out; So, while they are hearing of a Sermon, they remember something, but *take the Sieve out of the Water*, as soon as they are gone out of the Church, all is forgotten. *Let these sayings* (saith Christ) *sink down into your*

* Luke 5. 44. *ears* * ; in the original it is put
 * *ἰσχυρὰ ὁ. these sayings into your ears* *. As
μῆν.

a man that would hide a Jewel from being stolen, locks it up safe in his Chest. *Let them sink*; The word must not only fall as the dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which soaks to the root of the tree, and makes it fructifie. O how often doth Satan, that fowl of the Air, pick up the good seed that is sown!

Use. Trial. *Use.* Let me put you upon a serious tryal? Some of you have heard

heard much, you have lived forty, fifty, sixty years under the blessed Trumpet of the Gospel: What have you learned? you may have heard a thousand Sermons, and yet not learned one: Search your consciences.

1. You have heard much against sin: Are you *Hearers*, or are you *Scholars*.

How many Sermons have you heard against *Covetousness*, That it is the *root* on which Pride, Idolatry, Treason do grow*? one calls ^{* 1 Tim.} it a * Metropolitan sin: It is *Μα-^{2, 4.}* ^{* ΜΗΤΡΟ-} *lum complexum*, it doth twist a great ^{πολιν πάλ-} many sins in with it. There is ^{της κακί-} hardly any sin but Covetousness is a main ingredient into it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the Horse-leech: which cry, *give, give.*

How much have you heard against *rash anger*; That it is a short phren- ^{* Ira est} ^{brevi in-} ^{sania. Sen.} *lie**, a dry drunkenness; that it rests ⁱⁿ

* *Quod prodest vinum non bibere, & ira inebriari?* Hier. Eccl. 7. 9.

* *Magnoque irarum fluctuat æstu.* Virg.

in the *bosom of fools* *? and upon the least occasion do your spirits * begin to take fire? How much have you heard against *swearing*? It

is Christs express mandate, *Swear*

* Mat. 5. *not at all* *; this sin of all other
34.
* Eph. 5. may be term'd the *unfruitfull work*
11. *of darkness* *; It is neither sweetened with pleasure, nor enriched with profit (the usual vermilion, wherewith Satan doth paint sin.)

Swearing is forbidden with a *sub pœna*. While the Swearer shoots his Oaths, like *flying arrows*, at God, to pierce his glory, God shoots a *flying Roll* of * Curses against him: and do you make your tongue a *Racket*, by which you toss Oaths as Tennis-balls? Do you sport your selves with Oaths, as the Philistines did with *sampson*, which will at last pull the house about your ears? Alas! how have they learned what sin is, that have not yet learned

* Zach. 5. 2, 4.

learned to leave sin? doth he know what a Viper is, that plays with it?

2. You have heard much of Christ; have you learned Christ? The Jews (as one saith) carried Christ in their *Bibles*, but not in their *heart**; Their sound *went in* * Hierom. *to all the earth**, Rom. 10. 18. The * Rom. 14. 18. Prophets and Apostles were as trumpets, whose sound went abroad into the World; yet many thousands who heard the noise of these Trumpets, had not learned Christ; *They have not all obeyed*, ver. 16.*

1. A man may know much of Christ, and yet not learn Christ. The *devils* knew Christ*.

2. A man may preach Christ, and yet not learn Christ; as *Judas*, and the pseudo-Apostles*.

3. A man may profess Christ, and yet not learn Christ. There are many professors in the World that Christ will profess against*.

Quest. 22, 23.

Quest.

Quest. What is it then to learn Christ?

Answ. 1.

Answ. 1. To learn Christ, is to be *made like Christ*, when the divine characters of his holiness are engraven upon our hearts; *We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image**: There is a Metamorphosis made: A sinner viewing Christs Image in the Glass of the Gospel, is transformed into that Image. Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but went away quite changed. A true Saint is a divine Land-skip or Picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively pourtrayed and drawn forth: He hath the same Spirit, the same Judgment, the same Will with Jesus Christ.

* Cor. 3.
18.

μεταμορ-
φουμεθα.

2. To learn Christ, is to *believe*

* Joh. 20: in him; *My Lord, my God*: When we do not only *credere Deum*, but in *Deum*; which is the actual application of

of Christ to our selves, and as it were the spreading of the sacred medicine of his blood upon our Soul. You that have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, *My Jesus*; be not offended if I tell you, the Devil can say his Creed as well as you.

3. To learn Christ, is to *live Christ*. When we have Bible-conversations, our Lives as rich Diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the Church of God*, and are (in some * Phil. 1. sense) parallel with the life of Christ, ^{27.} as the transcript with the Original. So much for the first notion of the word.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Containing the Second Proposition.

II.

2. *Observ.* ἔμαθον is a word imports difficulty.

* Ἐμαθον significat hanc rem esse disciplinam, & exercitationis, & se divinitus doctum esse. Estius in loc. Beza.

Non ex revelatione, aut ex libris didicit, sed ex longo rerum usu, & gratia Christi per spiritum residentem. Zanchy.

Doctr. 2.

* Ἀρα διδασκαλίας ὄρει τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ γυμνασίας καὶ μελέτης, ἐν ᾧ εὐκοτόρεθωτόν ὄρει ἀλλὰ, καὶ σφόδρα δύσκολον καὶ καυδόν. Chrysof.

II. **T**His word ἔμαθον, *I have learned*, is a word imports difficulty; it shews how hardly the Apostle came by his contentment of mind; it was not *natura gentium*, S. Paul did not come naturally by it, but he had learned it *. It cost him many a prayer and tear; it was taught him by the Spirit.

Whence, *Doctr. 2. Good things are hard to come by.* The business of Religion is not so facile as most do imagine: *I have learned*, saith S. Paul *. Indeed you need not learn a man to sin, this

This is natural *, & therefore facile, it * Psal. 58.

Comes as water out of a Spring. 'Tis

an easie thing to be wicked; Hell

will be taken without storm *, but

* *Facilis
descensus
Averni.*

Matter of Religion must be learned.

To cut the flesh is easie; but to prick

a Vein, and not to cut an Artery is

hard. The trade of sin needs not to

be learned, but the *Art of Divine Con-*

contentment is not atchieved without

holy industry; *Quodov, I have learned.*

There are two pregnant reasons

why there must be so much study

and exercitation.

1. Because spiritual things are

1. *Contra
naturam.*

against nature. Every thing in Re-

ligion is antipodes to Nature. There

are in Religion two things, *Cre-*

rendenda, & Facienda, and both are a-

gainst Nature. 1. *Crendenda*, Mat-

1. *Creden-
da.*

ters of faith. As, for a man to be

justified by the righteousness of ano-

ther; to become a fool that he

may be wise; to save all by losing

all; this is *against nature*. 2. *Faci-*

2. *Faciend-
da.*

enda,

enda, Matters of Practice. As

1. *Self-denial*; for a man to deny his own *wisdom*, and see himself blind; his own *will*, and have it melted into the will of God; plucking out the right eye, beheading and crucifying that sin, which is the *favorite*, and lies nearest to the heart*

* *Peccatum in deliciis.* Ber.

For a man to be dead to the world and in the midst of want to abound. For a man to take up the Cross, and follow Christ, not only in golden but bloody paths; to embrace Religion when it is dress'd in its night clothes, all the Jewels of honor and preferment being pull'd off; this is *against nature*, and therefore must be learned. 2. *Self-examination*.

Malum vitium excusare, quàm excutere. Sen.

For a man to take his heart (as a Watch) all in pieces; to set up a spiritual inquisition, or Court of conscience, & traverse things in his own soul; to take *David's Candle* and *Lantern**, and search for sin; nay as Judge to pass the sentence upon him

* *Psal. 119.*
105.

himself * this is *against nature*, and will not easily be attained to without learning. ^{24. 17.} 3. *Self-reformation.* ^{Meme adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum.} To see a man as *Caleb*, of another spirit, walking antipodes to himself, the current of his life altered, and running into the chanel of Religion; this is wholly *against nature*; when a stone ascends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent; the motion of the soul heaven-ward is a violent motion, it must be learned, flesh and blood is not skill'd in these things: Nature can no more cast out Nature, than Satan can cast out Satan.

2. Because spiritual things are ^{2. Supra naturam.} above nature. There are some things *in nature* that are hard to find out, as the cause of things, which are not learnt without study: *Aristotle*, (a great Philosopher) whom some have call'd an Eagle fallen from the clouds; yet could not find out the motion of the river *Euripus*, there-

C

fore

fore threw himself into it, what then are divine things, which are in a sphere above nature, and beyond all humane disquisition? as the Trinity, the hypostatical Union; the mystery of Faith, to believe against hope; only Gods Spirit can light our Candle here. The Apostle calls

* *Tā βυθῶν*
τῶ Θεῷ.
1 Cor. 2.
10.

these *the deep things of God* *, The Gospel is full of jewels, but they are lock'd up from sense and reason.

The Angels in Heaven are searching
 * *Pet. 1. 12* into these sacred depths *.

Use.

Use. Let us beg the Spirit of God to teach us, we must be *divinitus edocti*: The Eunuch could read, but he could not understand, till *Philip*

* *Act. 8. 29* *joined himself to his Chariot* *. Gods Spirit must join himself to our chariot; he must teach, or we cannot learn: *All thy children shall be taught*

* *Is. 53. 13* *of the Lord* *. A man may read the figure on the Dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the Sun shine upon the Dial; we may read the

the Bible over, but we cannot learn to purpose till the Spirit of God shines into our hearts *. Oh, im-^{*2Co.4.6.} plore this blessed Spirit, it is Gods Prerogative-Royal to teach. *I am the Lord thy God, that teacheth thee to profit* *. Ministers may tell us our^{* II. 8. 17.} lesson, God only can *teach us* ; We have lost both our hearing and eyesight ; therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever since *Eve* listened to the Serpent, we have been deaf ; and since she looked on the tree of Knowledge, we have been blind : but when God comes to teach, he removes these impediments *. We^{* II. 34. 5.} are naturally dead * ; who will go^{* Eph. 2. 17.} about to teach a dead man ? Yet behold, God undertakes to make dead men to understand mysteries ! God is the grand Teacher. This is the reason the Word preached works so differently upon men : two in a Pew, the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the Or-

C 2dinances

dinances as a dead Child at the Breast, and gets no nourishment. What is the reason? because the Heavenly gale of the Spirit blows upon one, and not upon the other; One hath *the anointing of God, which*

* 1. John *teacheth him all things* *, the other

2. 27. hath it not. Gods Spirit speaks sweetly but irresistibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could sing the new song, but those who were

* Rev. 14. *sealed in their foreheads* *, reprobates

2.

* *Novum Canticum reprobis discere non possant.* Peræus.

could not sing it *. Those that are skillful in the Mysteries of Salvation, must have the Seal of the Spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer, *Lord, breathe thy Spirit into thy Word*; and we have a promise, which may add wings to prayer, *If*

* Luke 11.

13.

* *ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?*

And thus much of the first part of the

the Text, The *scholar*; which I intended only as a short gloss or paraphrase.

CHAP. IV.

The second branch of the Text, The Lesson it self; with the proposition.

II. **I** Come now to the second, II. which is the main thing. *The Lesson it self; in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and certainly more to be wondred at in *St. Paul*, that he knew how to turn himself to every condition, than all the learning in
C 3 the

the world besides, which hath been so applauded in former ages by *Julius Caesar, Ptolomy, Xenophon*, the great admirers of Learning.

The Text hath but few words in it, *In every state be content*: But if that be true which once *Fulgentius* said, That the most golden Sentence is ever measured by *brevity* and *sua-vity*, then this is a most accomplished Speech; here is *magnum in parvo*. The Text is like a pretious Jewel, little in *quantity*, but great in *worth* and *value*.

Doctr.

The main Proposition I shall insist upon is this, *That a gracious spirit is a contented spirit*. The Doctrine of Contentment is very superlative; and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be Christians.

I. It is an *hard Lesson*. The Angels in Heaven had not learned it; they were not contented: Though their estate was very glorious, yet they

they were still soaring aloft, and aimed at something higher, *Jud. ver. 6.* *The Angels which kept not their first estate*; they kept not their estate, because they were not contented with their estate. Our first Parents cloath'd with the white robe of Innocency in Paradise, had not learned to be content; they had aspiring hearts, & thinking their humane nature too low and home-spun, would be crowned with the Deity, and be *as Gods**: Though they had the* *Gen 3.5.* choice of all the trees in the Garden, yet none would content them but the *tree of Knowledge*, which they supposed would have been as eye-salve to have made them omniscient. Oh then, if this Lesson were* *Ars om.* so hard to learn *in innocency*, how *nino mira* hard shall we find it*, who are clog- *et difficilis* ged with corruption? *que toto*

2. It is of *universal extent*, con- *cordis ad-*cerns all. 1. It concerns *Rich* *nisu disce-* *da est.* *Greg. hom.* *16 in E-* *zech.* *men.* One would think it needless

to press those to Contentment, whom God hath blessed with great estates, but rather perswade them to be humble and thankful; nay, but I say, *be content*. Rich men have their discontents as well as others, as appears, 1. When they have a great estate, yet they are discontented that they have no more; they would make the hundred Talents a thousand. A man in Wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts: Covetousness is a dry dropsie: an earthly heart is like the *grave that is never satisfied**, Therefore I say to you

* Sicut
hydropicus.
Quo plus
sunt potæ,
plus sitiun-
tur aquæ.
Hyperius.

rich men, *Be content*.

* Prov. 30.
16.
Τὸ ἐν-
δοξίας ἡ-
δὴ ἡ γέ-
σας.
* Acts 5.
36.

2. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their estates (which is very seldom) yet, though they have *estate* enough, they have not *honor* enough*; If their *Barns* are full enough, yet their *Turrets* are not high enough. They would be some body in the world, as *Theudas* who boasted himself to be some body*; they

they never go so chearfully as when the wind of honor and applause fills their sails; if this wind be down they are discontented. One would think *Haman* had, as much as his proud heart could desire; he was set above all the Princes, advanced upon the pinnacle of honor to be the second man in the Kingdom *; yet in the * *Est. 3.1.* midst of all his pomp, because *Mordecai* would not uncover and kneel, he is discontented, *vers. 2.* and full of wrath *vers. 5.* and there is no way to assuage this plurisie of revenge, but by letting all the Jews blood, and offering them up in sacrifice. The itch of honor is seldom allayed, without blood; therefore I say to you rich men, *Be content.*

3. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their honor and magnificent titles, yet they have not always contentment in their *relations*. She that lies in the bosom, may sometimes blow the coals

26 *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

coals, as *Jobs* Wife, who in a pet would have him fall out with God himself, *Curse God and die*. Sometimes children cause discontent; how oft is it seen that the Mothers milk doth nourish a Viper? and he that once suck'd her breast, goes about to suck her blood? Parents do often of *grapes* gather thorns, and of *figs* thistles; Children are sweet-briar: Like the Rose, which is a fragrant flower, but, as *Basil* saith, it hath its prickles. Our Relative comforts are not all pure wine, but mixed; they have in them more dregs than spirits, and are like that River *Plutarch* speaks of*, where the waters in the morning run sweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no *Charter of exemption* granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called upon to be contented.

* ΓΛΥΚΥ-
ΠΙΝΕΩΝ.

2. The Doctrine of Contentment concerns poor men. You that do suck so liberally from the breasts

breasts of Providence, *be content*; it is an hard Lesson, therefore it had need be set upon the sooner. How hard it is when the livelihood is even gone, a great estate boiled away almost to nothing, then to be content? The means of subsistence is in Scripture called *our life*, because it is the very sinews of life. The woman in the Gospel spent *all her living upon the Physicians* *: in the * Luke 8. 43. Greek it is *ἔλον τὸν βίον*; she spent her whole life upon the Physicians, because she spent her means by which she should live. 'Tis much when poverty hath clipped our wings, then to be content; but, *difficilia pulchra*, though hard, it is excellent; and the Apostle here had learn'd *in every state to be content*.

God had brought Saint *Paul* into as great variety of conditions, as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; else sure he could never have gone through it with so much cheer-

cheerfulness. See into what vicissitudes this blessed Apostle was cast, ** 2. Cor. 4. 8. we are troubled on every side *, there was the sadness of his condition; but not distressed, there was his content in that condition; We are perplexed, there is his affliction; but not in despair, there is his contentation.* And if we read a little further, *In afflictions *, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, &c.* there is his trouble; and behold ** Vers. 10. his content, * As having nothing, yet possessing all things.* When the Apostle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that sweet contentment of mind (which was like musick in his Soul) he possessed all. We read a short Map or History of his sufferings. ** 2 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25. In prisons more frequent *, in death oft, &c.* Yet behold the blessed frame and temper of his spirit, *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Which way soever Providence did

did blow, he had such heavenly skill and dexterity; that he knew how to steer his course. For his outward estate he was indifferent, he could be either on the top of *Jacobs Ladder* or the bottom; he could sing either *placentia* or *lachrymæ*, the dirg or the antheme; he could be any thing that God would have him; *I know how to want, and how to abound*, there is a rare pattern for us to imitate. *Paul* in regard of his faith and courage, was like a *Ceder*, he could not be stirred; but for his outward condition, he was like a *Reed*, bending every way with the wind of Providence. When a prosperous gale did blow upon him, he could bend with that, *I know how to be full*; and when a boistrous gust of affliction did blow, he could bend in humility with that, *I know how to be hungry*. *St. Paul* was ἀνὴρ τετραγώνος, (as *Aristotle* speaks) like a *Die* that hath four squares, throw it w^{ch} way you will, it

Homo quadratus. Erasmus.

it falls upon a bottom : Let God throw the Apostle which way he would, he fell upon this *bottom* of Contentment. A contented spirit is like a watch ; though you carry it up and down with you , yet the spring of it is not shaken, nor the wheels out of order, but the watch keeps its perfect motion : so it was with *St. Paul*, though God had carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other. The *spring* of his heart was not broken, the *wheels* of his affection were not disordered, but kept their constant motion toward Heaven, *still content*. The ship that lies at anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks : Flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them : A Christian having cast Anchor in Heaven , his heart never sinks : a gracious spirit is a contented spirit.

This

This is a rare art: *Paul* did not learn it at the feet of *Gamaliel*; I am instructed, *μεμύνημαι**; *verse 12.* * *Μεμύνημαι.*
 I am initiated into this holy Myste- *μαι.*
 ry: as if he had said, I have gotten *Mysteriis*
 the *divine art*, I have the knack of *initiatum*
 it. God must make us right Artists. *sum.*
 If we should put some men to an *Zanchy.*
 Art that they are not skill'd in, *Sacris im-*
 how unfit would they be for it? *butus sum.*
 Put an Husbandman to Limning or *Ambr,*
 drawing Pictures, what strange
 work would he make? this is out
 of his sphere. Take a Limner, that
 is exact in laying of Colours, and
 put him to plough, or set him to
 planting and grafting of Trees, this
 is not his Art, he is not skill'd in it.
 Bid a natural man live by Faith,
 and when all things go cross, *Be*
contented; you bid him do that he
 has no skill in, you may as well bid
 a child guide the Stern of a Ship.
 To live contentedly upon God in
 the deficiency of outward comforts,
 is

32 *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

is an Art which *flesh and blood* have not revealed: nay, many of Gods own children, who excell in some duties of Religion, when they come to this of *Contentment*, how do they bungle they have scarce commenced Masters of this Art.

C H A P. III.

The resolving of some Questions.

FOR the illustrating of this Doctrine, I shall propound these Questions.

Quest. *Quest. I.* Whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented.

Answ. *Answ.* Yes; for else he is not a *Saint* but a *Stoick*. *Rachel* did weep to weep for her children (*there was nature*;) but her fault was she refused to be comforted (*there was discontent*.)

content.) Christ himself was sensible when he sweat great drops of blood and said, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me**; yet ^{Mar. 26.} he was contented, and sweetly submitted his Will. Nevertheless, *not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The Apostle bids us *humble our selves under the mighty hand of God**, which we ^{2 Pet. 5.} cannot do unless we are sensible ^{6.} of it.

Qu. 2. Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented?

Answ. Yes: *Unto thee have I opened my cause*, Jer. 20. 12.* and *David poured out his complaint before the Lord**. We may cry to God, and desire him to write down all our injuries; Shall not the Child complain to his Father; When any burden is upon the spirit, Prayer gives vent, it easeth the heart: *Hannah's spirit was burdened, I am (says she) a woman of a troubled spirit**. ^{1 Sam. 2. 17.}

D

Now,

Now, having prayed and wept, she went away, and was no more sad; only here is the difference between an holy complaint, and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain *to God*; in the other we complain *of God*.

Quest.

Quest. 3. What is it properly that Contentment doth exclude.

Answ.

Answ. There are three things which Contentment doth banish out of its Diocess, and can by no means consist with it.

What
content-
ment ex-
cludes.
* Psalm
55.2.

1. It excludes a *vexatious repining*; this is properly the daughter of Discontent, *I mourn in my complaint**: he doth not say, I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart, it is a rising up against God. When the Sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blasphemy.

phemy. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boyls off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an *uneven discomposure* : When a man saith I am in such straights, that I know not how to evolve or get out ; I shall be undone. Head and heart are so taken up, that a man is not fit to pray, or meditate, &c. he is not himself : just as when an army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that, the Army is put into disorder : So a mans thoughts run up and down distracted. Discontent doth dislocate and unjoynt the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a *childish disposency*; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate or wind himself out of the present trouble, begins *accumbere oneri*, to faint and sink under. For care is to the mind

as a burden to the back, it loads the Spirits, and with overloading sinks them. A despondent spirit is a discontented spirit.

CHAP. VI.

Shewing the Nature of Contentment.

What
contenta-
tion is.

HAVING answered these Questions, I shall in the next place come to describe this *αὐτάρκεια* or Contentment.

* *Se equa-
nimit
fert. Bede.*

It is a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a Christian carries himself in an equal poize in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three Aphorisms.

I.
Aphorism.
*Αὐτάρ-
κεια non
acquisitio-
ne, sed in-
fusione.*

I. Contentment is a *divine thing*; it becomes ours not by *acquisition*, but *infusion*; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the

the Spirit of God in the Soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of Philosophy, but is of an heavenly birth: It is therefore very observable, that *Contentment* is joined with Godliness, and goes in equipage; But *Godliness with Contentment is great gain* *. *Contentment* being a * 1 Tim. 6. 6. consequent of Godliness, or concomitant, or both: I call it *divine*, to contradistinguish it to that *Contentment* which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have seemed to have this *Contentment*, but it was only σκῆν τῆς ἀρετῆς, the shadow and picture of it; the *Byrill*, not the true *Diamond*: theirs was but *civil*, this is *sacred*: theirs was only from Principles of *Reason*, this of *Religion*: theirs was only lighted at Nature's torch, this at the Lamp of Scripture. Reason may a little teach *Contentment*; as thus, Whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to, and if I meet with crosses, it is

* Ferre
quam sor-
tem omnes
patiuntur,
nemo recu-
sat.

but πάντων πόρτιον, a Catholick misery; all have their share, why therefore should I be troubled *? Reason may suggest this; and indeed this may be rather *constraint*, than *content*: but to live securely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature supplies, Religion only can bring this into the Soul's Exchequer.

2.
Aphorism.

2. Contentment is an *intrinsic* thing; it lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment hath both its fountain and stream in the Soul. The Beam hath not its light from the air: the beams of comfort which a contented man hath, do not arise *extrinsecè*, from foreign comforts, but from within. As sorrow is seated in the spirit, *The heart knows its own grief* * : So Contentment lies within the Soul, and doth not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this

* Prov. 14.
10.

this blessed Contentment ; it is a spiritual thing and ariseth from spiritual grounds, *viz. the apprehension of Gods love.* When there is a tempest without, there may be musick within; a Bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart : Outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christians heart, where Contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our Money and Plate; but not of this Pearl of Contentment, unless we are willing to part with it ; for it is locked up in the *Cabinet of the heart* : The soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of Contentment, is like *Noah* in the Ark, that can sing in the midst of a Deluge.

3. Contentment is an *Habitual* thing ; it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some Stars which are seen but seldom : it is a settled tem-

3.
Aphorism.

* Rom. 12.

13.

per of the heart. One action doth not denominate: he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so; but he is said to be liberal, that is *given to liberality**; that is, who upon all occasions is willing to indulge the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man, that is given to Contentment. It is not *casual*, but *constant*. Aristotle in his Rhetorick, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from *passion*, and those which arise from *complexion*; the pale face may look red when it blusheth; but this is only a passion: he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man who is so upon an occasion, (and perhaps when he is pleased;) but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

CHAP.

CH A P. VII.

Reasons pressing to holy Contentment.

HAVING opened the nature of Contentment, I come next to lay down some Reasons or Arguments to Contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The first is, *Gods precept*: It is ^{*Reason 1.*} charged upon us as a duty; ^{*Virtute*} *Be content with such things as you have* *; ^{*precepti.*} * Heb. 13. 5. the same God who hath bid us believe, hath bid us be content; if we obey not, we run our selves into a spiritual *præmunire*. Gods Word is a sufficient Warrant; it hath authority in it, and must be a *superseas* or *sacred spell* to discontent: *ipse dixit* was enough among Pythagoras his Scholars; *Be it enacted*, is the
the

the Royal stile. Gods Words must be the star that guides, and his will the weight that moves our obedience; his *fiat* is a Law, and hath majesty enough in it to captivate us into obedience: our hearts must not be more unquiet than the raging Sea, which at his Word is still'd *.

* Mat. 8.
26.

Reason 2.
Virtute
Promissi.

2. The second Reason enforcing Contentment, is, *Gods Promise* for, *He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, Heb. 14. 5.* where God hath engaged himself under hand and seal for our necessary provisions. If a King should say to one of his Subjects, I will take care for thee; as long as I have any Crown Revenues thou shalt be provided for; if thou art in danger, I will secure thee; if in want, I will supply thee; would not that Subject be content? Behold, God hath here made a promise to the Believer, and as we were entred into Bond for his security, *I will never leave thee*: Shall not

this

this charm down the devil of discontent? *Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will preserve them alive* *. Methinks I see the godly * Jer. 49.
man on his death-bed much discontented, and hear him complaining, II.
What will become of my Wife and Children when I am dead and gone? they may come to poverty: Saith God, Trouble not thy self, *be content*, I will take care of thy children: and, *Let thy Widow trust in me*. God hath made a promise to us, *That he will not leave us*, and hath entail'd the promise upon our *Wife and Children*; and will not this satisfie? True Faith will take Gods single Bond, without calling for Witnesses.

3. Be contented, *by vertue of a decree*. Whatever our condition be, God the great Umpire of the world hath *ab æterno* decreed that condition for us, and by his providence ordered all appurtenances thereunto. Let a Christian often think with himself,
Reason 3.
Vertue
Decreti,

self, who hath placed me here, whether I am in a higher state, or in a lower; not Chance or Fortune (as the purblind Heathens imagined); no, it is the wise God that hath by his Providence fixed me in this Orb; We must act that scene which God will have us: Say not, Such a one hath occasioned this to me; look not too much at the under-wheel. We read in *Ezekiel* of *a wheel within a wheel* *; Gods Decree is the cause of the turning of the wheels, and his Providence is the inner wheel that moves all the rest. Gods providence is that *πρὸς δόλιον* or Helm, which turns about the whole Ship of the Universe. Say then as holy David, I ⁷⁸¹¹⁷⁰ *was silent* *, because thou, Lord, didst ¹⁷⁰ *it* *. Gods Providence (which is nothing else but the carrying on of his Decree) should be a *supersedeas* and counterpoison against discontent: God hath set us in our station, and he hath done it in wisdom,

We

We fancy such a condition of life good for us ; whereas, if we were our own carvers, we should often cut the * worst piece. *Lot* being put to his choice did chuse *Sodom* *, which * *Ista eligimus quam plus nocent quam placet.* soon after was burnt with fire. *Rachel* was very desirous of children, *Give me children or I dye* *; and it cost her her life in bringing forth a child. *Abraham* was earnest for *Ishmael*, *O that Ishmael may live before thee* * ! but he had little comfort either of him or his Seed ; he was born a Son of strife ; *His hand was against every man, & every mans hand against him.* The Disciples wept for Christs leaving the world, they chose his corporal presence ; whereas it was best for them that Christ should be gone, for *else the Comforter would not come* *. * *Joh. 16.* *David* chose the life of his child, *he wept and fasted for it* * ; whereas if the child had lived, it would have been a perpetual Monument of his shame. We stand oft in our own light ;

light ; if we should sort or parcel out our own comforts, we should hit upon the wrong. Is it not well for the Child that the Parent doth chuse for it? were it left to it self, it would perhaps chuse a knife to cut its own fingers. A man in a paroxysm calls for Wine, which if he had, It were little better than poison: 'Tis well for the Patient that he is at the Physicians appointment.

The consideration of a Decree determining, and a Providence disposing all things that fall out, should work our hearts to holy Contentment. The wise God hath ordered our condition : if he sees it better for us to abound, we shall abound ; if he sees it better for us to want, we shall want : Be content to be at Gods dispose.

God sees in his infinite wisdom the same condition is not *convenient* for all ; that which is good for one, may be bad for another: One season
of

of weather will not serve all mens occasions; one needs *sun-shine*, another *Rain*: One condition of life will not fit every man, no more than one Suit of apparel will fit every body: Prosperity is not fit for all, nor yet adversity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater stock of grace, more faith and patience; he can *gather grapes of thorns*, pick some comfort out of the Cross; every one cannot do this. Another man is seated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place requires more parts and judgment, which every one is not capable of^{*}; perhaps he can use his estate better, he hath a publick *heart* as well as a publick *place*. The wise God sees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is he placeth men in different orbs and spheres, some higher, some lower: one man desires *health*, God

^{*} *Ex omni ligno non fit Mercurius.*

sees

sees sickness better for him; God will work health out of sickness, bringing the *body of death* into Consumption: Another man desires *liberty*, God sees restraint better for him; he will work his liberty by restraint; when his feet are bound, his heart shall be most enlarged. Did we believe this, it would give check to the sinful disputes and cavils of our hearts. Shall I be discontented at that which is enacted by a Decree, and ordered by a Providence? Is this to be a Child, or a Rebel?

CHAP. VIII.

Use 1.

Shewing how a Christian may make his life comfortable.

Use 1. **I**T shews how a Christian ^{Use 1.} may come to lead a com- ^{Informa}fortable life, even an heaven upon earth, be the times what they will; viz. by *Christian Contentment**; the ^{*Prov. 15.} comfort of life doth not stand ^{13.} in the abundance of things which he doth possess*; but it is in being ^{* Luke 12} contented*. Is not the Bee as well ^{15.} contented with the feeding on the ^{* Nulle profecto majores}

sunt divitiæ, quam suâ sorte contentum esse, hæc enim virtus efficit, ut id quod habet aliquis, sit ei satis, suumq; animum in paupertate reddet divitem. Hyperius.

E

dev,

dew, or sucking from a flower, as the Ox that grazeth on the mountains? Contentment lies within a man, *in the heart*; and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our Barns filled, but our minds quiet. The contented man (saith *Seneca*) is the happy man: Discontent is a fretting humour, which dries the brains, wastes the spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life: Discontent makes a man that he doth not enjoy what he doth *possess*. A drop or two of Vinegar will sour a whole glass of Wine. Let a man have the affluence & confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of discontent will embitter and poison all. *Comfort* depends upon *Contentment*. *Jacob* went halting when the sinew upon the hollow of his thigh shrank; so when the sinew of Contentment begins to shrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as necessary to keep the life comfortable, as

oyl is necessary to keep the lamp burning : The clouds of discontent do often drop the showers of tears.

Would we have comfort in our lives? we may have it if we will *.

A Christian may carve out what condition he will to himself*. Why dost

thou complain of thy Troubles? it is not Trouble that troubles, but

Discontent; it is not the water with-

out the Ship, but the water that gets within the leak, which drowns it : It

is not outward affliction that can make the life of a Christian sad; a

contented mind would sail above these waters: but when there's a leak

of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted

and sinks: Do therefore as the Mariners, pump the water out, and stop

this spiritual leak in thy soul, and no trouble can hurt thee.

** Quique
est fortuna
sua faber.*

** Quid
votis opus
est? fac it
ipse felici-
tem. Sen.*

CHAP. IX.

Use 2.

A check to the discontented Christian.

Reproof. Use 2. **H**ere is a just reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost epidemical*. Some not content with their callings which God hath set them in, must be a step higher, from the *Plough* to the *Throne*, who like the spider in the *Proverbs*, will take hold with their hands and be in *Kings Palaces*; *Proverbs* 30. 28. Others from the *Shop* to the *Pulpit**; they would be in the Temple of *Honor*, before they are in the Temple of *Virtue*; who step into *Moses Chair*,

* *Quis est tam compositæ felicitatis, ut non aliquâ ex parte cum statu sui qualitate rixetur?* Boetius de Consol. Philos. l. 2.

* Numb. 12 2.

Chair, without Aaron's Bells and Pomegranates ; like Apes, which do most shew their deformity when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God hath bestowed gifts upon men in private to edifie, that he hath enriched them with many mercies ; but, *seek they the Priest-hood also* * ? * Numb. What is this but discontent ; arising^{16. 9.}

from high-flown pride ? These do secretly tax the Wisdom of God, that he hath not screwed them up in their condition a peg higher. *Tentat* August. *superbia, ut frangat.* Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better : *Sua*

quemque conditiones pœnitet : One man commends this kind of life, another commends that * ; one man * *Hic utraque circumfluit vitam cœlibem deflet, ille* thinks a Country-life best, another a City-life ; as the Poet elegantly expresseth it.

nuptiis fœlix, orbis liberis alieno censum nutrit heridi, alius prole latus, filii delectis mœstus illachrymat. Boet.

*O fortunati mercatores, gravis annis
Miles ait, multo jam fractus membra
labore;*

*Contra Mercator navim jactantibus
austis,
Milizia est potior, quid enim concur-
ritur horæ*

*Momento ? cita mors venit, aut victo-
ria læta. Hor.*

The Souldier thinks it best to be a Merchant, and the Merchant to be a Souldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God will have them. We may cry out with the same Poet.

*Quæ sit, Mecenas, ut nemo quam sibi
sortem,
Seu ratio dederit, seu fors objecerit illâ
Contentus vivat ? laudet diversa se-
quentes. Hor. I Satyr.*

How is it that no man is contented?
Very

Very few Christians have learned Saint Paul's lesson; neither poor nor rich know how to be content; they can learn any thing but this.

1. If men are poor, they learn to be, 1. *Envious*; they malign those that are above them; anothers prosperity is an eye-sore; when Gods Candle shines upon their neighbours Tabernacle, this light offends them: In the midst of wants men can (in this sense) abound; viz. in *envy* and *malice*: An *envious* eye is an evil eye.
2. They learn to be *querulous*, still complaining, as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling of their wants, they want this or that comfort; whereas their greatest want is a contented spirit. Those that are well enough content with their *sins*, yet are not content with their *condition*.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be *covetous*, thirsting insatiably after the world, and by any unjust means

56 *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

means scraping it together; *their right hand is full of bribes*, as the

* Psal. 26. Psalmist expresseth it *. Put a good
10.

Cause in one scale, and a piece of Gold in the other, and the Gold weighs heaviest. There are (saith *Solomon*) four things that say, *It is not*

* Prov. 30. *enough* *: I may add a fifth, *viz.* the
15. *heart of a covetous man*: So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

Never certainly since the Creation did this sin of discontent *reign*, or rather *rage*, more than in our times; never was God more dishonoured: you can hardly speak with any, but the passion of his tongue betrays the discontent of his heart; every one lisps out his trouble, and here even the stammering tongue speaks too free and fluently. If we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good look from us, but presently we are sick of discontent, and ready to die out of an humour. If God will not
give

give the people of *Israel* for their
lusts, they bid him take their lives ;
they must have Quails to their Man-
na. *Abab*, though a King (and one
would think his Crown-lands had
been sufficient for him, yet) is fullen
and discontented for want of *Naboths*
Vineyard. *Jonah*, though a good
man and a Prophet, yet ready to die
in a pet* ; and because God kill'd * *Jonah*,
his Gourd, Kill me too, said he. 4. 8.
Rachel, Give me children, or I die :
he had many blessings if she could
have seen them, but wanted this of
contentation. God will supply our
wants, but must he satisfy our lusts
too? Many are discontented for a
very trifle ; another hath a better
dress, a richer jewel, a newer fashion.
Nero not content with his Empire,
was troubled that the Musicians
had more skill in playing than he :
how phantastick are some, that pine
away in discontent for the want
of those things, which if they had,
would

would but render them more ridiculous.

CHAP. X.

Use 3.

A Swafive to Contentment.

Use 3.
Exhorta-
tion.

Use 3. **I**T exhorts us to labour for Contentation; this is that which doth beautifie and bespangle a Christian, and as a spiritual embroidery, doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

Objection. But methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, Alas! how is it possible to be contented!

* Lam. 3. 7 the Lord *hath made my chain heavy**, he hath cast me into a very sad con-

Homer
Iliad. 2.

dition. Ἀλλὰ μοι Αἰγίοχος Χερσίδης Ζεύς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν.

Ὡς με μείλ' ἀπρηκλῆς χεῖρας ἢ νοικτα βάλλει.

Answer.

Answer. There is no sin but labour either

either to hide it self under some mask; or if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate it self by some Apology. This sin of Discontent I find very witty in its Apologies; which I shall first discover, and then make a Reply. We must lay it down for a Rule, That Discontent is a *sin*; so that all the Pretences and Apologies wherewith it labours to justifie it self, are but the painting and dressing of a Strumpet.

SECT. I.

The first Apology that Discontent makes, Answered.

The first Apology which Discontent makes in this; I have lost a Child. *Paulina* upon the loss of her Children was so possessed with a spirit of sadness, that she had like to have intomed her self in her own discontent.

discontent: Our love to *Relation* is oftentimes more than our love to *Religion*.

1. Reply.

Ans. 1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he taketh them away. If we must *in every thing* give thanks, *1 Thess. 5. 18.* then in nothing be discontented.

2. Reply.

2. Perhaps God has taken away the *Cistern*, that he may give you the more of the *Spring*; he hath darkned the *Star-light*, that you may have more *Sun-light*. God intends you shall have more of himself; and, is not he better than *ten* *Sans*? Look not so much upon a temporal loss, as a spiritual gain; the Comforts of the world run *dregs*; those which come out of the Granary of the Promise are purer and sweeter.

3. Reply.

3. Your child was not given, but lent: *I have, saith Hanna, lent my Son to the Lord**: She lent him! the

* 1 Sam.
2. 21.

Lord

Lord had but lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent : What a man lends he may call for it again when he please. God hath put out a child to thee a while to nurse, wilt thou be displeased if he takes his child home again? O be not discontented that a Mercy is taken away from you ; but rather be thankful that it was lent you so long.

4. Suppose your child be taken *4. Reply.* from you, either he was good or bad : If he was *rebellious*, you have not so much parted with a child as a burden, you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you. If he was *religious*, then remember, he is taken *from the evil to come**, and placed in his centre of * *Isa. 57. 1.* felicity. This lower Region is full of gross and hurtful vapours ; how happy are those who are mounted into the Celestial Orbs ! The righteous *is taken away* : in the Original

מִקְרָא * ginal it is, he is gathered* ; a wicked child dying is cut off, but the pious child is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and candy them, and preserve them by them, so hath God gathered thy child as a sweet flower, that he may candy it with glory, and preserve it by him for ever. Why then should a Christian be discontented? why should he weep excessively? *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me; but weep for your selves** : So, could we hear our children speaking to us out of heaven, they would say, weep not for us who are happy, we lie upon a soft pillow, even in the bosom of Christ; *the Prince of Peace* is embracing us, and kissing us with the kisses of his lips; be not troubled at our preferment: *Weep not for us, but weep for your selves*, who are in a sinful sorrowful world; you are in the valley of tears, but we are on the mountains of spices: we are gotten

* Luke
23.28.

gotten to our harbour, but you are still tossing upon the waves of inconstancy. O Christian, be not *discontented* that thou hast parted with such a child, but rather rejoice that thou hadst such a child to part with: Break forth into thankfulness. What an honor is it to a Parent to beget such a Child, that while he lives, encreaseth the joy of the glorified Angels*; and when he dies, encreaseth the number of the glorified Saints?

* Luke 15. 10.
Lachryma penitentium sunt vivum Angelorum.
Bern. ser. 30. super Cant.

5. If God hath taken away one of your children, he hath left you more, he might have stripped you of all: He took away all *Job's* comforts, his estate, his children; and indeed his wife was left, but as a cross; Satan made a Bow of this rib (as *Chrysostom* speaks) and shot a Tentation by her at *Job*, thinking to have shot him to the heart; *Curse God and die*, but *Job* had upon him the breast-plate of *Integrity*; and though his children were taken away, yet not his graces,

64 *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

graces? still he is content, still he blessed God. O think how many mercies you still enjoy! yet our base hearts are more discontented at one loss, than thankful for an hundred mercies.

God hath plucked one bunch of Grapes from you; but how many pretious clusters are left behind?

Object. But it was my only child, the staff of my age, the seed of my comfort, and the only blossom out of which the honor of an ancient Family did grow.

Answer. *Ans. I.* God hath promised you (if you belong to him) a name better than of sons and daughters*: Is he dead that should have been the monument to have kept up the Name of a Family? God hath given you a new name, he hath written your name in the Book of Life: behold your spiritual Heraldry; here is a name that cannot be cut off.

2. Hath

2. Hath God taken away thy *only child*? he hath given thee his *only son*: this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses, that hath Christ? he is his Fathers *brightness**, his *riches**, his *delight* *. * Heb. 1. 3. * Col. 2. 9. Is there enough in Christ to delight * Pl. 42. 1. the heart of God? and is there not enough in him to ravish us with holy delight? He is *wisdom* to teach us, *righteousness* to acquit us, *sanctification* to adorn us, he is *ὡς ἐν βασιλείᾳ*, that Royal and Princely gift; he is the *bread of Angels**, the joy and * *Christus* triumph of Saints; he is *τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πάντι*, *all in all* *; why then art thou discontented? though thy child * *panis angelorum.* Bern. * Col. 3. 10 be lost, yet thou hast him for whom all things are lost.

7. And lastly, let us blush to think that Nature should seem to out-strip Grace. *Pulvillus* an Hea- Pet. Mart. then, when he was about to consecrate a Temple to *Jupiter*, and news was brought to him of the death of

F

his

his son, would not desist from his enterprise, but with much composure of mind, gave order for decent burial.

S E C T. II.

The second Apology answered.

2. *Apology.* 2. Apology that discontent makes is, I have a great part of my estate strangely melted away, and trading begins to fail.

God is pleased sometimes to bring his children very low, and cut them short in their estate; it fares with them as with that widow who had nothing in her house save a *pot of oyl**; but be content.

* 2 Kings

4:2.

1. *Reply.*

1. God hath taken away your *Estate*, but not your *portion*. This is a sacred Paradox. Honor and Estate are not part of a Christians Jointure, they are rather *accessaries* than *essentials*; and are extrinsecal and

and foreign, therefore the loss of these cannot denominate a man miserable, still the portion remains, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul**. Sup- * Lam 3.
pose one were worth a million of ²⁴ money, and he should chance to lose a pin off his sleeve, this is no part of his estate, nor can we say he is undone: the loss of sublunary comforts, is not so much to a Christians portion, as the loss of a pin is to a million. *These things shall be added to you**; *Adjicientur*, they shall * Mar. 6,
be cast in as overplus: when a man ²² buys a piece of cloth, he hath an inch or two given into the measure: now, though he lose his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone: for still the whole piece remains: our outward estate is not so much in regard of the *portion*, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece; why then should a Christian be discontented, when the title to his spiritual treasure remains? a thief may take away all my money

that I have about me, but not my land; still a Christian hath a title to the *land of promise*. *Mary* hath chosen the better part, *which shall not be taken from her*.

2. Reply.

* *Pecuni-
am perdi-
disti for-
tassis illa
te perderet
manens.*

2. Perhaps if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost*; outward comforts do often quench inward heat. God cannot bestow a jewel upon us, but we fall so in love with it, that we forget him that gave it; what pity is it that we should commit idolatry with the creature God is forc'd sometimes to drain away an estate: the plate and jewels are often cast over-board to save the passenger. Many a man may curse the time that ever he had such an estate, it hath been an *enchantment* to draw away his heart from God. Some

* 1 Tim.

6.9.

* *Aliud est
esse divi-
tem, aliud*

velle fieri divitem; hic cupiditas accusatur, non aurum. Bede.

bled that God hath prevented a
snare? Riches are *Thorns* * : art * Mat. 13.
thou angry that God hath pull'd a-^{7.}
way a thorn from thee? Riches are *Spina suf-*
compar'd to *thick clay* * : Perhaps *focantes &*
thy affections, which are *the feet of the*
soul, might have stuck so fast in this
golden clay, that they could not
have ascended up to heaven : be
content, if God dam up our out-
ward comforts, it is that the stream
of our love may run faster another
way.

3. If your estate be small; yet ^{3. Reply.}
God can bless a little. 'Tis not how
much *money* we have, but how much
 blessing. He that often curseth the
bags of gold *, can bless the *meal* * *Ex malè*
in the barrel, and the *oyl in the cruse*. *Quasitis*
What if thou hast not the full flesh-
pots? yet thou hast a promise, *I will*
bless her provision *, and then a little *vix gaudet*
goes a great way ; be content, thou *tertius ha-*
hast the dew of a blessing distill'd : a
dinner of green herbs, where love is,

is sweet, I may add, wherethe love of God is, another may have more estate than you, but more care; more riches, less rest; more revenues, but withall more occasions of expence: he hath a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give him

* Eccl. 6. 2. *power to eat thereof* *, he hath the *dominion* of his estate, not the *use*; he holds more, but enjoys less; in a word, thou hast less gold than he, perhaps less guilt *.

Λεπτῶς,
καλῶς ἢ
κρεῖσσον ἢ
λαμπρῶς,
κακῶς,
Menand.

* *Lucrum in arcâ, damnum in Conscientiâ.* Aug. in Serm. Innocent.

4. You did never so thrive in your spiritual trade; your heart was never so low, as since your condition was so low; you were never *so poor in spirit*, never *so rich in faith*. You did never run the ways of Gods *Commandments* so fast as since some of your golden weights were taken off. You never had such trading for heaven all your life *, this is *uber-*

* *Felix
mutatio,
ubi Deum
pro mundo
accipimus,
pro terrâ
Cœlum.*

rimus

rimus quæstus. You did never make such adventures upon the promise, as since you left off your Sea-adventures. This is the best kind of Merchandise ; O Christian, thou never hadst such incomes of the spirit, such spring-tides of joy ; and what though weak in estate, if strong in assurance ? be content ; what you have lost one way, you have gain'd another.

5. Be your losses what they will in *s. Reply.* this kind, remember in every loss there is only a *suffering* : but in every discontent there is a *sin*, and one sin is worse than a thousand sufferings. What ? because some of my *revenues* are gone, shall I part with some of my *righteousness* ? shall my faith and patience go too ? because I do not possess an estate, shall I not therefore possess my own spirit ? O learn to be content.

S E C T. III.

The third Apology Answered.

3. *Apology.* The third Apology is, It is sad with me in my relations; where I should find most comfort, there I have most grief. This Apology or Objection branched it self into two particulars; whereto I shall give a distinct Reply.

1. *Branch.* I. My child goes on in Rebellion; I fear I have brought forth a child for the Devil. It is indeed sad to think that hell should be paved with the skulls of any of our children: and certainly the *pangs of grief* which the mother hath in this kind, are worse than *her pangs of travel*; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented: for consider,

2. *Reply.* I. You may pick something out of your childs undutifulness; the childs

children's sin is sometimes the Parents
Sermon : *quod dolet, docet* : the
undutifulness of children to us may
be a *memento* to put us in mind of
our *undutifulness* once to God. Time
was when *we* were rebellious chil-
dren ; how long did our hearts stand
out as Garrisons against God ? how
long did he parly with us, and be-
seech us, ere we would yield ; he
walked in the tenderness of his heart
towards us, but we walked in the
frowardness of our hearts towards
him ; and since grace hath been
planted in our souls, how much of
the wild Olive is still in us ? how
many motions of the Spirit do we
daily resist ; how many unkindnes-
ses and affronts have we put upon
Christ ? Let this open a spring of re-
pentance ; look upon your child's
rebellion, and mourn for your own
rebellion.

2. Though to see him undutiful 2. *Reply* :
is your *grief*, yet not always your
sin.

fin. Hath a Parent given the child, not only the milk of the breast, but *the sincere milk of the Word**? Hast thou seasoned his tender years with Religious education? thou canst do no more; Parents can only work knowledge: God must work grace; they can only lay the wood together, it is God must make it burn; a Parent can only be a guide to shew his child the way to Heaven, the Spirit of God must be a loadstone to draw his heart into that way. *Am I in Gods stead* (saith *Jacob*) *who hath with-held the fruit of the Womb**? can I give children? So, is a Parent in Gods stead to give grace? Who can help it, if a child having the light of conscience, Scripture, education, these three Torches in his hand, yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of sin? Weep for thy child, pray for him; but do not sin for him, *by discontent.*

* Gen. 30.
2.

3. Say not, you have brought forth a child for the Devil; God can reduce him, He hath promis'd to turn the heart of the children to their Parents*, and to open springs of grace in the Desert*: When any child is going full-sail to the Devil, God can blow with a contrary wind of his spirit, and alter his course. When Paul was breathing out persecution against the Saints, and was sailing hell-ward, God turns him another way; before he was going to *Damascus*, God sends him to *Ananias*; before a Persecutor, now a Preacher. Though our children are for the present fallen into the Devils Pound, God can turn them from the power of Satan*, and bring them in at the twelfth hour. *Monica* was weeping for her Son *Augustine*, at last God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous instrument in the Church of God.

2. Branch,

2. The second branch of the objection is; But, my husband takes ill courses; where I looked for honey, behold a sting.

Answ. 'Tis sad to have the living and the dead tyed together; yet, let not your heart fret with discontent; mourn for his sin, but do not murmur. For,

1. Reply.

1. God hath placed you in your relation, and you cannot be discontented, but you quarrel with God. What? for every cross that befalls us, shall we call the infinite wisdom of God in question? O the blasphemy of our hearts!

2. Reply.

* *Etiam peccatum ipsum in bonum convertit.*
Aug. in Rom. 8.

2. God can make you a gainer by your husbands sin; perhaps you had never been so good, if he had not been so bad. The fire burns hottest in the coldest climate: God often by a divine *Antiperistasis* turns the sins of others to our good*, and makes our *maladies* our *medicines*. The more profane the husband

husband is, oft the more holy the wife grows; the more earthly he is, the more heavenly she grows; God makes sometimes the husbands sin a spur to the Wifes grace. His exorbitances are *quasi flabellum*, as a pair of bellows to blow up the flame of her zeal and devotion the more.

Is it not thus? doth not thy husbands wickedness send thee to prayer? Thou perhaps hadst never prayed so much, if he had not sinned so much: his deadness quickens thee the more, the stone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The Apostle saith, *The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband**; * 1 Cor; 7: 14. but in this sense, the believing wife is sanctified by the unbelieving husband, she grows better; his sin is a whetstone to her grace, and a *medicine* for her security.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

*The fourth Apology Answered.** *Apology.*

The next Apology that discontent makes, is ; But my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false.

* *Job 6.*
15.

Ans. 'Tis sad when a friend proves like a *Brook in Summer**; The Traveller being parched with heat, comes to the brook, hoping to refresh himself, but the brook is dried up: yet be content.

* *Reply.** *Psal. 53.*
12, 13.

1. You are not alone, others of the Saints have been betrayed by friends; and when they have leaned upon them, they have been as a *foot out of joint*. This was true in the Type, *David**; It was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou, a man, my equal, my guide and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together; and in the Antitype Christ, he

he was betrayed by a friend; & why should we think it strange to have the same measure dealt unto us, as Jesus Christ had? *the servant is not above his Master.*

2. A Christian may often read his *2. Reply* sin in his punishment; Hath not he dealt treacherously with God? how oft hath he grieved the Comforter, broken his vows? and through unbelief sided with Satan against God? How oft hath he abused love? taking the jewels of Gods mercies, and making a golden calf of them, serving his own lusts? how oft hath he made the free grace of God, which should have been a bolt to keep out sin, rather a key to open the door to it? these wounds hath the Lord received *in the house of his friend* *. * Zach. 13.6. Look upon the unkindness of thy friend, and mourn for thy own unkindness against God: shall a Christian condemn that in another, which he hath been too guilty of himself?

3. Hath

80 *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

3. Reply.

3. Hath thy friend proved treacherous? perhaps you did repose too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon an house, than the pillars will bear, it must needs break. God saith, *Trust ye not in a friend**; perhaps you did put more trust in him, than you did dare to put in God. Friends are as *Venice-glasses*, we may use them, but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break: Behold matter of humility, but not of fullness and discontent.

4. Reply.

Prov. 18.
14.

4. You have a friend in Heaven will never fail you. *There is a friend* (saith *Solomon*) *that sticketh closer than a brother*. Such a friend is God, he is very studious and inquisitive in our behalf; he hath a debating with himself, a consulting and projecting how he may do us good; he is the *best friend*, which may give contentment in the midst of all discourtesies of friends.

Con-

Consider, 1. He is a *loving friend*.

God is love *, hence he is said some-^{* 1 Joh. 4. 16.} times to engrave us on the *palms of his hands*, Isa. 49. 16. that we may be never out of his eye; and to carry us *in his bosom*, Isa. 40. 11. near to his heart. There is no stop or stint in his love; but as the River *Nilus* it overflows all the banks: his love is as far *beyond* our thoughts, as it is above our deserts. O the infinite love of God, in giving the Son of his love to be made *flesh* *,^{* Quantus Deus quantillus factus est homo? Aug.} which was more than if all the Angels had been made *worms*! God in giving Christ to us, gave his very heart to us; here is love penfill'd out in all its glory, and engraven as with the *point of a Diamond*. All other love is hatred in comparison of the love of our friend.

2. He is a *careful friend*; He *careth for you* *.

* 1 Pet. 5. 7

1. He minds and transacts our business as his own, he accounts his

G

peoples

peoples interests and concernments as his interest.

2. He provides for us, grace to enrich us, glory to enoble us ; It was *Dauids* complaint, *No man cared*

* Pf. 142. 4. *for my soul**; a Christian hath a friend that cares for him.

* Dan. 2. 20. 2. He is a *Prudent friend* *. A friend may sometimes erre through ignorance or mistake, and give his friend poison instead of sugar ; but

* Job 9. 4. *God is wise in heart* *. He is skilful as well as faithful ; he knows what our disease is, and what Physick is most proper to apply ; he knows what will do us good, and what wind will be best to carry us to heaven.

* Deut. 7. 9, 10. 4. He is a *Faithful friend* * ; and he is faithful, 1. In his promises,

* Tit. 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye hath promised* *. Gods people are *children that will not lye* ; but God is a God that *cannot lye* ; he will not deceive the faith of his people ;

people ; nay, he cannot : he is called *ἡ ἀληθεία*, *the truth* ; he can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. The Lord may sometimes *change* his promise, (as when he converts a temporal promise into a spiritual;) but he can never *break* his promise.

5. He is a *Compassionate friend*. Hence in Scripture we read of *the yearnings of his bowels**: Gods friend ^{Jer. 31.} ^{20a} friendship is nothing else but compassion ; for there is naturally no *affection* in us to desire his friendship, nor no *goodness* in us to deserve it ; the load-stone is in himself. When we were full of *blood*, he was full of *bowels*: When we were enemies, he sent an Embassage of Peace: When our hearts were turned back from God, his heart was turned towards us. O the tenderness and sympathy of our friend in Heaven ! We our selves have some relentings of heart to those which are in misery ;

but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us, therefore he is called the *Father of*

* 2 Cor. *mercies* *.

I. 3.

6. He is a *constant friend*. His

* Lam. 3. *compassions fail not* *. Friends do often in adversity drop off as leaves

* *Dum sue* in Autumn *. *Amici circa sartaginem*, as *Plutarch* saith; these are rather flatterers than friends: *Joah*

was for a time faithful to King *David's* house, he went not after *Abshalom's* Treason, but within a while proved false to the Crown, and went after the treason of *Adonijah* *; God

* 1 Kings

I. 7.

is a friend for ever. *Having loved*

* *ἕως τέλους* his own, he loved them to the end *.

ἐς ἅπηνσεν.

Joh. 13. I.

What though I am despised? yet God loves me: What though my friends cast me off? yet God loves me: he loves *ἕως τέλους*, to the end, and there is no end of that love.

This methinks, in case of discourtesies, and unkindnesses, is enough to charm down discontent.

SECT.

SECT. V.

The fifth Apology answered.

The next Apology is, I am under great reproaches*. Let not this discontent; For,

1. It is a sign there is some good in thee; *Quid mali feci?* saith *Socrates*, what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? The *ap-
plause* of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their *censure* imports some good*. *David* wept and fasted, and that was *turned to his reproach**; as we must pass to heaven through the *pikes* of suffering, so through the clouds of Reproach.

2. If your reproach be for God, as *David's* was, *For thy sake I have born reproach**; then it is rather matter of *triumph*, than Dejection: Christ doth not say, when you are

G 3 reproached,

5. Apology.
* Deterio-
res sunt qui
famam cor-
rumpunt,
quam qui
prædia di-
ripiunt.
Greg.
1. Repl.

* Pf 16.20
* Pf. 69.10

* Pf. 69.7.

reproached, *be discontented*; but

* *Mat. 5.* *χδπετς, Rejoyce* *. Wear your reproach as a Diadem of honor, for

* *1 Pet. 4.* now a *Spirit of Glory rests upon you* *.

14. Put your reproaches into the Inventory of your riches; so did *Mo-*

* *Heb. 11.* *ses* *. It should be a Christians ambition to wear his Saviours Livery, though it be sprinkled with blood, and sullied with disgrace.

3 *Reply.* 3. God will do us good by reproach *; as *David* said of *Shimei* his

* *Beni per contumelias meliores existunt.* cursing, *It may be the Lord will requite good for his cursing this day* *; this

Greg. in Hom. puts us upon searching out sin. A

* *2 Sam. 16. 12.* child of God labours to read his sin in every stone of reproach that is cast

* *Detra- Hinc patientia nostra probatur.* at him; besides, now we have an opportunity to exercise patience and

Ang. l. 3. *contr.* humility *. 4. *Jesus Christ* was content to be

Per. l. reproached for us; *He despised the*

4. *Reply.* *shame of the Cross* *. It may amaze

* *Heb. 11.* us to think, that he who was God

2. could endure to be spit upon, to be

crowned

crowned with Thorns in a kind of
jeer; and when he was ready to bow
his head upon the Cross, to have
the Jews in scorn wag their heads,
and say, *he saved others, himself he
cannot save.* The shame of the Cross,
was as much as the blood of the
Cross: His Name was crucified be-
fore his Body. The sharp arrows
of Reproach, that the world did
shoot at Christ, went deeper into his
heart than the spear; his suffering
was so ignominious, that as if the
Sun did blush to behold, it with-
drew its bright beams, and masqued
it self with a cloud; (and well it
might, when the Sun of righteous-
ness was in an eclipse;) all this con-
tumely and reproach did the God of
glory endure, or rather despise for
us. Oh then, let us be content to
have our names eclipsed for Christ;
let not reproach lie at our heart, but
let us bind it as a crown about our
head. Alas, what is reproach? this

is but *small shot*, how will men stand in the mouth of the Cannon? those who are discontented at a reproach, will be offended at a faggot.

5. *Reply.* 5. Is not many a man contented to suffer reproach for maintaining his lust? and shall not we for maintaining the truth? Some *glory in*

* Phil. 3. *that which is their shame**: and shall we be ashamed of that which is our

glory? Be not troubled at these petty things: he whose heart is once divinely touched with the load-stone of Gods Spirit, doth account it his honour to be dishonoured for Christ*; and doth as much despise the worlds censure, as he doth their praise.

6. *Reply.* 6. We live in an Age, wherein men dare reproach God himself. The *Divinity* of the Son of God is blasphemously reproached by the *Socinian*; The blessed *Bible* is reproach'd by the *Anti-scripturist*, as if it

it were but a *legend of lies*, and every mans faith a fable; The *Justice* of God is called to the Bar of Reason by the *Arminian*; the *wisdom* of God in his providential actings, is taxed by the *Atheist*; The *Ordinances* of God are decryed by the *Familist*, as being too heavy a burden for a *free-born* conscience; and too low, and carnal for a sublime Seraphick spirit; The *ways* of God, which have the Majesty of holiness shining in them, are calumniated by the *Profane*; The mouths of men are open against God, as if he were an *hard Master*, and the path of Religion too strict and severe. If men cannot give God a good word, shall we be discontented or troubled, that they speak hardly of us? Such as labour to bury the glory of Religion, shall we wonder that their throats are *open Sepulchres* *, to bury our ^{* Rom. 3.} good name? Oh let us be contented ^{13.} while we are in Gods scouring-house, to

to have our names sullied a little; the blacker we seem to be here, the brighter shall we shine when God hath set us upon the celestial shelf.

S E C T. VI.

The sixth Apology answered.

6. Apology. The sixth Apology that Discontent makes, is disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men, as is futable to my quality and graces. And doth this trouble? Consider,

1. Reply. 1. The world is an unequal Judge; as it is full of *change*, so of *partiality*. The world gives her *Respects* as she doth her *places of preferment*, more by favour often, than desert. Hast thou the ground of real worth in thee? that is best worth that is in him that *hath* it; Honor is in him that *gives it**: better deserve respect, and

*Honor est
in hono-
rante.*

and not have it, than have it, and not deserve it.

2. Hast thou grace? God re-^{2. Reply.}
specteth thee, and his judgment is best
worth prizing. A Believer is a per-
son of honour, being *born of God*.
Since thou wast *pretious* in mine eyes,
thou hast been honourable, and I have
*loved thee**. Let the world think * *II. 43.4.*
what they will of you; perhaps in
their eyes you are a *cast-away*; in
Gods eyes a *Dove**, a *Spouse**, a *Jew-* * *Can. 2.*
*el**; others account you the dregs & *14.*
off-scouring of the world*, but God * *Can. 9.1.*
will give *whole Kingdoms for your* * *Mal. 3.*
*ransom**. Let this content; no matter * *1 Cor. 4.*
with what oblique eyes I am looked * *14.*
upon in the world, if I am *rectus in* * *II. 43.5.*
curia, God thinks well of me. 'Tis
better that God approve, than man
applaud. The world may put us in
their *Rubrick*, and God put us in
his black Book. What is a man the
better, that his fellow-prisoners com-
mend him, if his Judge condemn
him?

him? Oh labour to keep in with God, prize his love: let my fellow-subjects frown, I am contented, being a favourite of the King of heaven.

3. *Reply.*

3. If we are the children of God, we must look for disrespect; a believer is *in* the world, but not *of* the world: we are here in a pilgrim condition, out of our own Country, therefore must not look for the respects & acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own Country *; 'Tis dangerous to be the worlds Favourite.

* Heb. 13.
14.

4. *Reply.*

4. Discontent arising from disrespect, favours too much of pride; an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, he cries out as Agur, *I am more brutish than any man* *; and therefore is contented, though

* Prov. 30.
25

though he be set *among the dogs of the flock**. Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankful, that he is not laid *in the lowest Hell**. A proud man sets an high value upon himself; and is angry with others, because they will not come up to his price. Take heed of pride; O had others a window to look into thy breast, (as *Crates* once expressed it) or did thy heart stand where thy face doth, thou wouldst wonder to have so much respect.

SECT. VII.

The seventh Apology answered.

The next Apology is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth*. Consider,

1. Your *sufferings* are not so great as your *sins*; Put these two in the ballance, and see which weighs heaviest;

7. *Apology.*

* *Scala*

aurea ad

cælum, sed

circumsep-

ta gladiis;

1. *Reply.*

viest; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins: he looks upon one at the great end of the Perspective, but upon the other at the little end of the Perspective. The carnal heart cries out, Take away the *Frogs*; but a gracious heart cries, take away the *iniquity* *. The one saith, never any one suffered as I have done: but the other saith, never any one sinned as

* 2 Sam.
24.10.

* Mic. 7.9. I have done *.

2. Reply.

2. Art thou under sufferings? thou hast an opportunity to shew the valour and constancy of thy mind; some of Gods Saints would have accounted it a great favour, to have been honored with martyrdom. One said, I am in prison, *till* I am in prison; thou countest that a trouble, which others would have worn as an *Ensign* of their glory.

3. Reply.

3. Even those who have gone only upon moral principles, have shewn

shewn much constancy and contentment in their sufferings. *Curtius* being bravely mounted, and in armour, threw himself into a great gulf, that the City of *Rome* might according to the Oracle be deliver'd from the Pestilence; and we having a Divine Oracle, *that they who kill the body, cannot hurt the soul*, shall we not with much constancy and patience devote our selves to injuries for Religion, and rather suffer for the truth, than the truth suffer for us? The *Decii* among the Romans vow'd themselves to death, that their legions and souldiers might be crown'd with the honor of the Victory. O what should we be content to suffer to make the truth victorious! *Regulus* * having sworn that he would **Pet. Mart.* return to *Carthage* (though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there) yet not daring to infringe his Oath, he did adventure to go; we then who are Christians, having made

made a vow to Christ in Baptism, and so oft renewed it in the blessed Sacrament, should with much contentation rather chuse to suffer than violate our sacred Oath. Thus the blessed Martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulness did they yield up their Souls to God? and when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the *body*, let them not the *mind* through discontent; shew by your heroick courage that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

SECT. VIII.

The eighth Apology answered.

8. Apology. The next Apology is, The prosperity of the wicked. *Answ.* I confess 'tis so often, that the evil enjoy all

all the good, and the good endure all the evil. *David*, though a good man; stumbled at this, and had like to have fallen *; well, be contented; * *Ps. 73. 2.* for remember :

1. These are not the only things, *1. Reply.* nor the best things; they are mercies without the pale; these are but acorns with which God feeds swine; you who are believers, have more choice fruit, the *Olive*, the *Pomgranate*, the fruit which grows on the *true Vine* Jesus Christ; others have the fat of the earth, you have the dew of heaven; they have a South-land; you have those springs of living-water which are clarified with Christs blood, and indulcorated with his love.

2. To see the wicked flourish, is *2. Reply.* matter rather of *pity* than envy; 'Tis all the heaven they must have. *Wo to you rich men, for ye have received your consolation**. Hence it was that *David* made it his solemn prayer, * *Luke 6. 24.* *Deliver me from the wicked, from men* *Ps. 17. 14.*

H

of

of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure, Psal. 17. 14. The words (methinks) are *David's Litany*; from men of the world which have their portion in this life *good Lord deliver me.* When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The world is first *musical*, and then *tragical*: if you would have a man fry, and blaze in hell, let him have enough of the *fat of the earth.* O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out to the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial. Therefore as that Souldier said to his Fellow, Do you envy me my grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them. So I say, Do you envy the wicked? alas, their prosperity is like *Hamans banquet* before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the Gallows through pleasant

pleasant fields, and fine galleries, or
to see him go up the ladder in cloth
of gold? The wicked may flourish
in their bravery a while; but, when
they flourish as the grass, it is, that they
*shall be destroyed for ever**. This proud * Pl. 92. 7.
grass shall be mown down. What-
ever a sinner enjoys, he hath a curse
with it*; and shall we envy? What if * Mal. 2. 2.
poisoned bread be given to dogs?
The long furrows in the backs of the
godly, have a *seed of blessing* in them,
when the table of the wicked be-
comes a snare, and their honor their
halter.

SECT. IX.

The ninth Apology answered.

2. The next Apology that discon- 9. *Apology*.
tent makes for it self, is *the evil of*
the times. The times are full of He-
resie and Impiety, and this is that
which troubles me. This Apology
H 2 consists

consists of two branches, to which I shall answer in *specie*; and,

1. Branch.
The Heresie of the times.

1. The times are full of Heresie. This is indeed sad, when the Devil cannot by violence destroy the Church, he endeavours to poison it; when he cannot with *sampsons* Fox-tails set the corn on fire, then he sows tares; as he labours to destroy the peace of the Church by *Division*, so the truth of it by *Errour*; we may cry out with *Seneca*, *Verè vivimus in temporum facibus*, we live in times wherein there is a sluice open to all novel opinions, and every mans *opinion* is his *Bible*. Well, this may make us mourn, but let us not murmur through discontent: Consider,

1. Reply.

1. Errour makes a discovery of men,

1.

1. *Bad men*: Error discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the Leprosie brake forth in the forehead, then was the *Leper* discovered.

Error

Error is a spiritual Bastard; the Devil is the Father, and pride the Mother; you never knew an erroneous man, but he was a proud man: now, it is good that such men should be laid open; to the intent, first, that Gods righteous judgments upon them may be adored *; Secondly, ^{*2Thes.2.} that others who are free, be not infected. ^{12.} If a man have the Plague, it is well it breaks forth; for my part, I would avoid an Heretick as I would avoid the Devil, for he is sent on his errand. I appeal to you, if there were a Tavern in this City, where under a pretence of selling Wine, many Hogsheads of Poison were to be sold, were it not well that others should know of it, that they might not buy? It is good that those who have poisoned opinions should be known, that the people of God may not come near, either the scent or taste of that poison.

2. Error is a *Touch-stone* to discover

* 1 Cor.
II. 14.

* Rev. 7.
14.

* Ambrose

ver good men, it tries the gold : There must be Heresies, that they which are ~~do not~~ approved, may be made manifest*. Thus our love to Christ, and zeal for truth doth appear. God shews who are the living fish, viz. such as swim against the stream; who are the sound sheep, viz. such as feed in the green pastures of the Ordinances; who are the Doves, viz. such as live in the best air, where the Spirit breaths: God sets a Garland of honor upon these; These are they which came out of great tribulation*. So, these are they that have opposed the Errors of the times; these are they that have preserved the virginity of their conscience; who have kept their judgment sound, and their heart soft. God will have a Trophy of honor set upon some of his Saints; they shall be renowned for their sincerity, being like the Cypress, *quæ viriditatem in hyeme non amittit**, which keeps its greenness and

and freshneſs in the Winter ſeaſon.

2. Be not ſinfully diſcontented; 2. *Reply.*
for God can make the errors of the Church advantageous to truth. Thus the truths of God have come to be more beaten out and confirmed; as it is in *Law*, one man lying a falſe title to a piece of Land, the true title hath by this means been the more ſearched into and ratified; ſome had never ſo ſtudied to defend the truth by *ſcripture*, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by *ſophiſtry*; all the miſts and fogs of error that have riſen out of the bottomleſs pit, have made the glorious Sun of *truth* to ſhine ſo much the brighter. Had not *Arius* and *Sabellius* broached thoſe damnable Errours, the truth of thoſe queſtions about the bleſſed *Trinity*, had never been ſo diſcuſſed & defended by *Athanaſius*, *Auguſtine*, and others; had not the Devil brought in ſo much of his

princely darkness, the Champions for Truth had never run so fast to Scripture to light their Lamps. So that God who hath a *wheel within a wheel*, over-rules these things wisely, and turns them to the best. Truth is an heavenly plant that settles by shaking.

3. Reply.

*Etiam val-
menta auri
pretiosa.*

3. God raiseth the price of his truth the more; the very shreds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is much counterfeit metal abroad, we prize the true gold the more; the pure wine of truth is never more pretious, than when unsound Doctrines are broached and vented.

4. Reply;

4. Error makes us more thankful to God for the jewel of truth. When you see another infected with the Plague, how thankful are you, that God hath freed you from the infection? when we see others have the *Leprosie in the head*, how thankful are we to God, that he hath not
given

given us over to believe a lye, and so be damned? It is a good use that may be made even of the Errour of the times, when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free grace of God, who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poyson.

2. The second branch of the A- <sup>2. Branch of the A-
pology.</sup> pology that discontent makes, is the <sup>The impi-
ety of the
times.</sup> impiety of the times. I live and converse among the profane; *O that I had wings like a Dove, that I might flye away and be at rest* *! *Answ.* It is * ^{Pl. 55.6.} indeed sad to be mixed with the wicked, *David beheld the transgressors, and was grieved* *; and *Lot* (who * ^{Pl. 119.} was a bright Star in a dark night) ^{58.} was vexed, or as the word in the Original may bear, *wearied out* *, * <sup>Kατα-
πορεύμενος</sup> *καταπορεύμενος* with the unclean conversation of the wicked *; he made the sins of *Sodom* spears to pierce his own soul; we ought (if there be any spark of divine love in us) to be very sensible of the

the sins of others, and to have our hearts bleed for them? yet let us not break forth in murmuring or discontent, knowing that God in his providence hath permitted it, and surely not without some reasons; For,

1. Reply.

1. The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly; the wise God often makes those who are *wicked* and *peaceable*, a means to safeguard his people from those who are *wicked* and *cruel*. The King of *Babylon* kept *Jeremy*, and gave special order for his looking to, that he did want nothing*. God sometimes makes *brazen sinners* to be *brazen walls* to defend his people.

*Jer. 35.
11, 12.*

2. Reply.

2. God doth interline & mingle the wicked with the godly, that the godly may be a means to save the wicked; such is the *beauty of holiness*, that it hath a magnetical force in it, to allure and draw even the wicked. Sometimes

times God makes a believing husband a means to convert an unbelieving wife, and *è contra*: *What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife**? The godly living among the wicked, by their prudent advice ^{1 Cor. 7.16.} and pious example, have won them to the embracing of Religion; if there were not some godly among the wicked, how, in a probable way without a miracle, can we imagine that the wicked should be converted? Those who are now shining Saints in heaven, sometimes served divers lusts*. Paul once a Persecutor; ^{Tit. 3.3.} Augustine once a Manichee; Luther once a Monk; but by the severe and holy carriage of the godly, were converted to the faith.

SECT.

S E C T. X.

*The tenth Apology answered.*10. Apo-
logy.

The next Apology that Discontent makes, is lowness of parts, and gifts.

I cannot, saith the Christian, discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegancy as others.

2. Reply.

*Answ. 1. Grace is beyond Gifts; Thou comparest thy grace with anothers gifts, there is a vast difference; Grace without gifts is infinitely better than gifts without grace; in Religion, the *vitals* are best; Gifts are more extrinsecal and common work of the Spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more distinguishing work, and is a Jewel hung only upon the Elect. Hast thou the *seed of God*, the *holy anointing*? be content.*

I. Thou

I. Thou sayest thou canst not discourse with that fluency as others.

Answ. Experiments in Religion are beyond notions, and *impressions* beyond *expressions*. Judas (no doubt) could make a learned discourse of Christ, but well fare the woman in the Gospel, that felt virtue coming out of him *. A sanctified heart is * Luke 3: better than a silver tongue. There ^{47.} is as much difference between gifts and grace, as between a Tulip painted on the wall, and one growing in the Garden.

II. Thou sayest, thou canst not pray with that elegancy as others.

Answ. Prayer is a matter more of the *heart* than the *head*. In prayer it is not so much *fluency* prevails, as *servency* *; nor is God so much taken * Ja. 5. 16. with the elegancy of speech, as the efficacy of the Spirit. Humility is better than volubility; here the Mourner is the Orator, sighs and groans are the best Rhetorick.

2. Reply.

2. Be not discontented ; For, God doth usually proportion a mans parts to the place where he calls him: some are set in a higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities ; but the most inferior member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

S E C T. XI.

The eleventh Apology answered.

11. Apology.

The next Apology is, *The troubles of the Church*. Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for my self as the publick. The Church of God suffers.

Ans. I confess it is sad, and we ought for this *to hang our harp upon the willow* *; he is a wooden leg in Christs body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a Christian must

* Ps. 137.

must not be *proud flesh*, so neither *dead flesh*. When the Church of God suffers, he must sympathize: *Jeremiah wept for the Virgin Daughter of Sion*. We must feel our brethrens hard cords through our soft beds; in Musick, if one string be touched all the rest sound; when God strikes upon our brethren, *our bowels must sound as an harp**; be sensible, but ^{*II. 16. 11} do not give way to discontent. For consider,

1. *God sits at the stern of his Church**; Sometimes it is as a ship tossed upon the waves, *O thou afflicted and tossed**; but cannot God ^{*II. 54. 12} bring this ship to heaven, though it meet with a storm upon the Sea? ^{Repl.} The ship in the Gospel was tossed, because *sin* was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, because *Christ* was in it. Christ is in the Ship of his Church, fear not sinking: The Churches Anchor is cast in Heaven. Do not we think God loves his Church,

Church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve Tribes were on *Aarons breast*, signifying how near to Gods heart his people are: They are his *portion**, and shall that be lost? His *glory**, and shall that be finally eclipsed? No certainly. God can deliver his Church, not only *from* but *by* opposition. The Churches pangs shall help forward her deliverance.

Deur.

32.9.

II. 46. 13.

2. Reply.

2. *God hath always propagated Religion by sufferings.* The foundation of the Church hath been laid in *blood**, and these sanguine showers have ever made it more fruitful. *Cain* put the knife to *Abels* throat, and ever since the Churches veins have bled; but she is like the *Vine*, which by bleeding grows; and like the Palm-tree, which may have this motto, *Percussa resurgit*, the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riseth. The holiness and patience of the Saints

* *Sanguine fundata est Ecclesia, sanguine crevit.*

Saints under their persecutions, hath much added both to the *growth* of Religion and the *Crown*. *Basil* and *Tertullian* observe of the primitive Martyrs, that divers of the Heathens seeing their zeal and constancy, turned Christians. Religion is that *Phoenix* which hath always revived and flourished *in the ashes* of holy men: *Isaiah* sawn asunder; *Peter* crucified at *Jerusalem* with his head downwards^{*}; *Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage*, * *Euseb.* *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*, both martyr'd for Religion: Yet evermore the Truth hath been *sealed* by blood, and gloriously dispersed; whereupon *Julian* did forbear to persecute, *non ex clementia, sed invidia*; not out of piety, but envy; because the Church grew so fast, and multiplied, as *Nazianzen* well observes.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Apology answered.

12. Apology.

The twelfth Apology that Discontent makes for it self, is this: It is not my Trouble that troubles me, but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent.

Ans. Be sure it be so; do not prevaricate with God and thy own soul: In true mourning for sin, when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed; but suppose the Apology be real, and sin is the ground of your discontent yet I answer, a mans disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds in these three cases.

1. Repl.
Dolor ex-
animans.

I. When it is *disheartning*; that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. If *Israel* had only pored upon their stinging, and not looked up to the bra-

zen Serpent, they had never been healed. That sorrow for sin which drives us away from God, is not without sin; for there is more *despair* in it than *remorse*: The Soul hath so many tears in its eyes that it cannot see Christ. Sorrow as sorrow doth not save (that were to make a Christ of our tears,) but is useful as it is preparatory in the soul, making sin *vile*, and Christ *pretious*. Oh look up to the brazen Serpent, the Lord Jesus; a sight of his blood will revive; the medicine of his *merits* is broader than our sore.

It is Satans policy, either to keep us from seeing our sins; or if we will needs see them, that we may be *swallowed up of sorrow**: Either he* *Cor. 2.* would *stupifie* us, or *affright* us; either keep the glass of the Law from our eyes, or else pencil out our sins in such crimson colours, that we may sink in the *quick-sands* of *despair*.

2.
Dolor im-
pediens.

2. When sorrow is *indisposing*, it untunes the heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloisters up the soul: This is not sorrow, but rather sullenness, and doth render a man not so much *Penitential* as *Cynical*.

3.
Dolor in-
tempesti-
vus.

3. When it is *out of season*; God bids us *rejoice*, and we *hang our harps upon the willows*; he bids us *trust*, and we cast our selves down, and are brought even to the margin of despair. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be sure to put us upon it when it is least in season.

When God calls us in a special manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white Robes, then Satan will be putting us into mourning, and instead of a *garment of praise*, cloath us with a *spirit of heaviness*; so God loseth the acknowledgment of a mercy, and we the comfort.

If thy sorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Christ, if it hath raised in thee high prizings of him, strong hunggings after him, sweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a Christian doth but sin to vex and torture himself further upon the wrack of his own discontent.

And thus I hope I have answered the most material Objections and Apologies which this sin of Discontent doth make for it self. I see no reason why a Christian should be discontented, unless for his discontent. Let me in the next place propound something which may be both as a Loadstone and a Whetstone to Contentation.

CHAP. XI.

Divine motives to Contentment.

AND so I proceed to the Arguments or Motives that may quicken to Contentment.

SECT. I.

The first Argument to Contentment.

The first
Argument
to Con-
tentment.

I. Consider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent if I could prescribe a Receipt or Antidote against Poverty;

verty ; but behold, here is that which is more excellent, for a man to want, and yet have enough ; this alone contentment of Spirit brings. Contentation is *παν φάρμακον*, a remedy against all our troubles, a *levamen* to all our burdens ; it is the *cure* of *care*.

Contentation, though it be not properly a *Gracé* (it is rather a *disposition of mind*) yet in it there is *optimum temperamentum*, an happy temperature and mixture of all the Graces : It is a most pretious compound, which is made up of *Faith, Patience, Meekness, Humility, &c.* which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are in *specie* these seven rare excellencies in Contentment.

I. A contented Christian carries *1. Excellency of Contentation.* heaven about him ; For what is Heaven, but that sweet repose and full contentment that the soul shall have in God ? In contentment there is the first-fruits of Heaven.

There are two things in a contented spirit which makes it like Heaven.

1.
Ibi Deus.

1. *God is there:* Something of God is to be seen in that heart. A discontented Christian is like a rough tempestuous sea; when the water is rough you can see nothing there; but when it is smooth & serene then you may behold your face in the water*: When the heart rageth through discontent, it is like a rough Sea; you can see nothing there unless passion and murmuring; there is nothing of God; nothing of Heaven in that heart: but by virtue of Contentment 'tis like the Sea when it is smooth and calm; there is a face shining there; you may see something of Christ in that heart, a representation of all the graces.

2.
Ibi requies. 2. *Rest is there:* O what a Sabbath is kept in a contented heart! What an Heaven! A contented Christian is like *Noah* in the Ark; as though

though the Ark were tossed with waves, *Noah* could sit and sing in the Ark. The soul that is gotten into the *Ark of Contentment* sits quiet, and sails above all the waves of trouble; he can sing in this spiritual Ark. The wheels of the Chariot move, but the Axle-tree stirs not: The circumference of the Heavens is carried about the Earth, but the Earth moves not out of its Centre. When we meet with motion and change in the creatures round about us, a contented spirit is not stirred or moved out of its centre. The sails of a mill move with the wind, but the mill it self stands still: An Emblem of Contentment. When our outward estate moves with the wind of Providence, yet the heart is settled through holy contentment; and when others are like Quick-silver, shaking and trembling through disquiet, the contented spirit can say as *David*, *O God, my heart is fixed,*
my

Pl.* 57.7. *my heart is fixed: What is this but a piece of heaven?

2. *Excellency.*

2. What ever is defective in the creature is made up in *Contentment*.

A Christian may want the comforts that others have, the land and possessions; but God hath distilled into his heart that contentment which is far better: In this sense that is true of our Saviour, *He shall have in this life*

Mat.* 19. *an hundred fold. Perhaps he that ventured all for Christ never hath his house or land again; I, but God gives him a *contented spirit*, and this breeds such joy in the soul as is infinitely sweeter than all his houses and lands which he left for Christ. It was sad with *David*, in regard of his outward comforts, he being driven (as some think) from his Kingdom; yet in regard of that sweet contentment which he found in God, he had more comfort than men use to have

Pl.* 4.7. in time of *harvest and vintage. One man hath house and lands to

live

live upon, another hath nothing, only a small trade, yet even that brings in a livelihood. A Christian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment, and so he knows as well how to want as to abound. O the rare *Art* or rather *Miracle* of Contentment! wicked men are often disquieted in the enjoyment of all things; the contented Christian is well in the want of all things.

Quest. But how comes a Christian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts?

Answ. A Christian finds contentment distilled out of the breasts of the Promises: He is poor in *purse*, but rich in *promise*. There is one Promise brings much sweet contentment into the soul; *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing* *. If the thing we desire be good for us, we shall have it; if it be not good, then the not having it

is

Psal. 34

10.

is good for us. The resting satisfied with this Promise gives contentment.

3. *Excellency.*

1 Cor.
7. 35.

3. Contentment makes a man in tune to serve God; it oyls the wheels of the soul, and makes it more agile and nimble; it composeth the heart and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, &c. How can he that is in a passion of grief or discontent *serve God without distraction**? Contentment doth prepare and tune the heart. First you prepare the Viol, and wind up the strings, ere you play a fit of Musick. When a Christians heart is wound up to this heavenly frame of contentment, then it is fit for duty. A discontented Christian is like *Saul*, when the *evil spirit* came upon him. O what jarrings and discords doth he make in prayer! When an Army is put into disorder, now it is not fit for Battel: When the thoughts are scattered and distracted about the cares of this life, a man

man is not fit for Devotion. Discontent takes the heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the present trouble, so that a mans mind is not upon his *Prayer*, but upon his *Cross*.

Discontent doth disjoint the soul; and it is impossible now that a Christian should go so steadily and cheerfully in Gods service. O how lame is his devotion! The discontented person gives God but *half* a duty; his Religion is nothing but *bodily exercise*, it wants a soul to animate it. *David* would not offer that to God which *cost him nothing**: where there * 2 Sam. 1
is too much worldly *care*, there is too * 24:24.
little spiritual *cost* in a duty. The discontented person doth his duties by *halfs*; he is just like *Ephraim*, a cake not turned*; he is a cake baked * Hol. 7:9;
on one side; he gives God the *outside*, but not the spiritual part; his heart is not in duty; he is baked on one side, but the other side dough;
and

and what profit is there of such raw indigested services? He that gives God only the skin of worship, what can he expect more than the shell of comfort? Contentation brings the heart into frame; and then only do we give God the flower and spirits of a duty, when the soul is composed: now a Christian doth *rem agere*, his heart is intense and serious. There are some duties which we cannot perform as we ought without Contentment: As,

1. *To rejoice in God.* How can he rejoice that is discontented? He is fitter for *Repining* than *Rejoycing*.

2. *To be thankful for mercy.* Can a discontented person be thankful? He can be *fretful*, not thankful.

3. *To justify God in his proceedings* *. How can he do this who is discontented with his condition? He will sooner censure Gods wisdom, than

* Ezra 9.
23.

than clear his justice. O then how excellent is *Contentation*, which doth prepare, and as it were string the heart for duty? indeed Contentment doth not only make our duties lively and agile, but *acceptable*. 'Tis this that puts beauty and worth into them, for Contentment *settles* the soul. Now, as it is with *milk*, when it is always stirring you can make nothing of it, but let it settle awhile, and then it turns to cream: When the heart is over-much stirred with disquiet and discontent, you can make nothing of those duties; how thin, how fletten and jejune are they? but when the heart is once settled by holy Contentment, now there is some worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4. Contentment is the spiritual ^{4. *Excellency.*} Arch or pillar of the soul; it fits a man to *bear burdens*: he whose heart is ready to sink under the least sin, by virtue of this hath a spirit invincible

cible under sufferings. A contented Christian is like the Camomile the more it is trodden upon the more it grows: As Physick works Diseases out of the body, so doth Contentment work trouble out of the heart: Thus it argues; If I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; if I am in want, God can relieve me. *Thou shalt not see wind nor rain; yet the valley shall be filled with water.** Thus holy Contentment keeps the heart from fainting; in the *Autumn* when the fruit and leaves are blown off, still there is sap in the root. When there is an *Autumn* upon our external felicity, and the leaves of our estate drop off; still there is the sap of Contentment in the heart, and a Christian hath life inwardly when his outward comforts do not blossom. The contented heart is never out of heart. Contentation is a golden shield that doth beat back discouragements. *Humility* is like the

* 2 Kings
3. 17,

to the net, which keeps the soul down, when it is rising through passion; and *Contentment* is the cork which keeps the heart up when it is sinking through discouragement. *Contentment* is the great underpropper; it is like the *beam* which bears whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a *Rock* that breaks the waves.

'Tis strange to observe the same affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themselves under it. The contented Christian is like *Sampson*, that carried away the gates of the City upon his back*; he can go away with his cross* *Judges* cheerfully, and makes nothing of it; *16.3.* the other is like *Issachar* couching down under his burden*: the reason* *Gen, 49.* is, the one is content, and that breeds^{14.} courage; the other discontented, and that breeds fainting. Discontent swells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this sacred sinew of

K

Con-

Contentment begins to shrink, we go limping under our afflictions. We know not what burdens God may exercise us with; let us therefore preserve Contentment, as our *contentment*, such will be our *courage*. *David* with his five stones and his sling, defied *Goliath*, and overcame him. Get but Contentment into the sling of your heart, and with this sacred stone you may both defie the world, and conquer it; you may break those afflictions which else will break you.

5. *Excellency.*

5. A fifth excellency is, Contentment prevents many *sins* and *tentations*.

1. It prevents many *sins*. Where there wants Contentment, there wants no sin; discontentedness with our condition is a sin that doth not go alone, but is like the first link of the chain, which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, there are two sins which
Con-

Contentation prevents.

I. *Impatience.* Discontent and Impatience are two twins; *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer* *? As if God were so tied, ^{* 2 Kings 6.33.} that he must give us the mercy just when we desire. Impatience is no small sin, as will appear if you consider whence it ariseth: As,

I. It is for want of Faith. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent Grace; it believes that Gods wisdom tempers, and his love sweetens all ingredients; this works patience? *shall I not drink the Cup which my Father hath given me?* Impatience is the daughter of Infidelity. If a Patient hath an ill opinion of the Physician, & conceits that he comes to poyson him, he will take none of his Receipts. When we have a prejudice against God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we storm, and cry out through impatience. We are like a foolish

man ('tis *Chrysostoms simile*) that cries out, Away with the plaster, though it be in order to a cure ; is it not better that the plaster smart a little, than the wounder fester and rankle ?

* I Cor.
13.5.

2. Impatience is for want of love to God. We will bear his reproofs whom we love, not only patiently, but thankfully. *Love thinks no evil* *. It puts the fairest and most candid gloss upon the actions of a friend ; *Love covers evil*. If it were possible for God in the least manner to erre, (which were blasphemy to think) love would cover that error ; love takes every thing in the best sense ; It makes us bear any stroke, *It endureth all things* * ; had we love to God, we should have patience.

* I Cor.
13.7.

3. *Impatience* is for want of *Humility*. The impatient man was never humbled under the burden of sin ; he that studies his sins , the numberless number of them, how they

they are twisted together, and sadly accented, is patient, and saith, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him**. * Mic. 7. 9.

The greater noise drowns the lesser; when the Sea roars, the Rivers are still; he that lets his thoughts expatiate about sin, is both silent and amazed, he wonders it is no worse with him. How great then is this sin of Impatience! and how excellent is *Contentation*, which is a *superfedeas* or counterpoison against this sin! The contented Christian believing that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to say, unless to justifie God*. That* Ps. 51. 4. is the first sin which *Contentation* prevents.

2. It prevents *murmuring*, a sin which is a degree higher than the other; *Murmuring* is a quarrelling with God, & inveighing against him; *They speak against God**; the murmur.* Numb. 1. 5. er saith interpretatively, that God

hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deserved better from him. The murmurer *chargeth God with folly*: This is the language, or rather *blasphemy* of a murmuring spirit; God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The *Israelites* are called in the same

* Numb. 17.10. text *murmurers* and *rebels* *; and is not *rebellion as the sin of Witchcraft*?

Thou that art a *murmurer*, art in the account of God as a *witch*, a *sorcerer*, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude: *Murmuring* oft ends in cursing: *Micha's* mother fell to cursing when the *talents of silver were taken away* *. So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away: Our *murmuring* is the devils *music*; this is that sin which God cannot bear; *How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me* *? It is a sin which whets the sword against a people; it is a land-destroying sin; *Murmur ye*

* Judg. 17.2.

* Numb. 14.7.

not

not as some of them also murmured,
and were destroyed of the destroyer*. * 1 Cor.
'Tis a ripening sin; this, without Gods ^{10.10.}
mercy, will hasten Englands funerals.
O then how excellent is Contentati-
on, which prevents this sin! To be
contented, and yet murmur, is a so-
llocism: A contented Christian doth
acquiesce in his present condition,
and doth not murmur, but admire.
Herein appears the excellency of
Contentation, it is a spiritual anti-
dote against sin.

2. Contentment prevents many ^{1. Tenta-}
temptations: Discontent is a devil ^{tion.}
that is always tempting: 1. It puts
a man upon *indirect means*: He that
is poor and discontented will at-
tempt any thing; he will go to the
devil for riches: he that is proud and
discontented will hang himself, as
Achitophel did when his Counsel
was rejected. Satan takes great ad-
vantage of our discontent; he loves
to fish in these troubled waters. Dis-

content doth both eclipse reason and weaken faith; and it is Satans policy, he doth usually break over the hedge where it is weakest. Discontent makes a breach in the soul, and usually at this breach the Devil enters by a tentation and storms the soul. How easily can the Devil by his *Logick* dispute a discontented Christian into sin? He forms such a syllogism as this; He that is in want must study self-preservation: But you are now in want, therefore you ought to study self-preservation. Hereupon to make good his *Conclusion*, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not distinguishing between what is *needful* and what is *lawful*. What? saith he, dost thou want a livelihood? never be such a fool as starve: take *the rising side* at a venture, be it good or bad, eat *the bread of deceit*, drink *the wine of violence*. Thus you see how the discontented man is a prey to that sad tentation, * *to steal and take Gods Name* in

* Prov.
30.9.

in vain. Contentation is a shield against temptation; for he that is contented, knows as well how to *want* as to *abound*.

He will not sin to get a living; though the *bill of fare* grows short, he is content. He lives as the birds of the air, upon Gods providence, and doubts not but he shall have enough to pay for his passage to heaven.

4. Discontent tempts a man to ^{2. *Temptation.*} *Atheism* and *Apostacy*; sure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he suffer them to be in want who have *walked mournfully before him**? saith Discontent; Throw ^{* Mal. 3.} off Christs livery; desist from thy ^{14.} Religion. Thus *Jobs* wife, being discontented with her condition, saith to her husband, *dost thou still retain thy integrity**; as if she had said, Dost ^{* Job 2.9.} thou not see, *Job*, what is become of all thy Religion; *Thou fearest God and eschewest evil*, and what art thou the

the better? See how God turns his hand against thee; he hath smitten thee in thy body, estate, relations, and *dost thou still retain thy integrity?* what? still devout? still weep and pray before him? Thou fool, cast off Religion, *turn Atheist*. Here was a sore tentation that the devil did hand over to *Job* by his discontented wife; only his grace as a golden shield did ward off the blow from his heart, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women*. What profit is it, saith the discontented person, *to serve the Almighty*? Those that never trouble themselves about Religion are the prosperous men; and I in the meanwhile suffer want; as good give over driving the trade of Religion, if this be all my reward. This is a sore tentation, and oft it prevails: Atheism is the fruit that grows out of the blossom of discontent.

Oh then behold the excellency of Contentment! It doth repel this
ten-

entation. If God be mine, saith the
contented spirit, it is enough; though
I have no lands or tenements, his
smile makes Heaven; *His loves are*
better than wine; *Better is the glean-*
ings of Ephraim, than the Vintage of
*Abiezer**: I have little *in hand*, but * Judg.
much *in hope*; my *liveliness* is short, 8.2.
but this is his promise, *even eternal*
*life**: I am pursued by *malice*; but * 1 John
better is persecuted godliness than 2.25.
prosperous wickedness. Thus divine
contentment is a spiritual antidote
both against *sin* and *tentation*.

6. Contentment sweetens every 6. *Excel-*
condition. Christ turned the water *lency*.
into Wine; so Contentment turns
the water of *Marah* into spiritual
Wine; Have I but little? yet it is
more than I can deserve or chal-
lenge: This *modicum* is in mercy;
'tis the fruit of Christs blood; 'tis the
legacy of free grace: A small present
sent from a King is highly valued:
This little I have is with a good con-
science

science. 'Tis not *stollen water*; guilt
hoth not muddied or poisoned it; it
runs pure. This *little* is a pledge of
more; this bit of bread, is an ear-
nest of that bread which I shall eat in
the Kingdom of God. This little wa-
ter in the cruse, is an earnest of that
heavenly *Nectar*, which shall be di-
still'd from the *true Vine*. Do I
meet with some crosses? my com-
fort is, if they be heavy I have not
far to go; I shall but carry my cross
to *Golgotha*, and there I shall leave
it: My cross is light in regard of the
weight of glory. Hath God taken
away my comforts from me? 'Tis
well, the Comforter still abides. Thus
Contentment, as an honey-comb,
drops sweetness into every condi-
tion. Discontent is a leaven that
sowres every comfort, it puts Aloes
and wormwood upon the breast of
the creature, it lessens every mercy,
it trebbles every cross; but the con-
tented spirit sucks sweetness from
every

every flower of providence, it can make a treacle of poison. *Contentation* is full of *Consolation*.

7. Contentment hath this excellency, it is the best *Commentator* upon Providence; it makes a fair interpretation of all Gods dealings: Let the Providence of God be never so dark or bloody; Contentment doth construe them ever in the best sense. I may say of it as the Apostle of charity, *It thinks no evil**. * 1 Cor. 13: Sicknes (saith Contentment) is Gods furnace to refine his gold, and make it sparkle the more; the prison is an Oratory, or house of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from me? he saw perhaps my heart grew too much in love with it; had I been long in that fat pasture, I should have surfeited; and the better my estate had been, the worse my soul would have been. God is wise; he hath done this, either to prevent some sin,
or

or to exercise some grace. What a blessed frame of heart is this? A contented Christian is an Advocate for God against unbelief and impatience; whereas discontent takes every thing from God in the world; it doth implead and censure God; This evil I feel is but a symptom of greater evil; God is about to undo me; *The Lord hath brought us hither into the wilderness to slay*

* Numb.
20.4.

us *. The contented soul takes all well; and when his condition is never so bad, he can say, *Yet God is*

* Pl. 73 1. *good* *.

S E C T. II.

The second Argument to contentation.

* O fortunatos nimium be-nas si sua Norint.
Vigg.

The second Argument or Motive to contentment is, a Christian hath that which may make him content *.

I. Hath

1. Hath not God given thee
 Christ? in him there are *unsearchable*
*riches**: He is such a Golden *Mine* of * Eph. 3. 8
 Wisdom and Grace, that all the
 Saints and Angels can never dig to
 the bottom; as *Seneca* said to his
 friend *Polybius**, *Never complain of** *Fas tibi*
thy hard fortune as long as Cæsar *non est de*
thy friend: so I say to a Believer, *fortuna*
 Never complain as long as Christ *conqueri,*
is thy friend: He is an enriching *salvo Cæ-*
 Pearl, a sparkling Diamond; the *sare. Sen.*
 infinite lustre of his merits makes us
 shine in Gods eyes*; in him there is * Eph. 1. 7
 both *fulness* and *sweetness*; he is *in-*
*effabile bonum**: Scrue up your * Aug.
 thoughts to the highest *axum* and pi-
 nacle, stretch them to the utmost
 period, let them expatiate to their
 full latitude and extent, yet they fall
 infinitely short of those ineffable &
 inexhaustible treasures which are
 locked up in Jesus Christ: And is
 not here enough to give the soul
 content? A Christian that wants *ne-*
cessaries,

cessaries, yet having Christ, he hath
*the one thing needful**.

* Qui ha-
 bet habet
 rem om-
 nia, habet
 omnia.

2. Thy soul is exercised and en-
 amelled with the graces of the Spirit,
 and is not here enough to give Con-
 tentment? Grace is of a divine
 birth; it is the new plantation; it is
 the flower of the heavenly Paradise;
 'tis the embroidery of the Spirit; 'tis
*the seed of God**; 'tis *the sacred uncti-*
on; 'tis Christs portraicture in the
 soul; 'tis the very foundation on
 which the superstructure of glory is
 laid. O, of what infinite value is
 Grace! what a Jewel is Faith! well

* 1 John
 3. 9.
 * 1 John
 2. 27.

2 Pet. 1. 1. may it be called *pretious* Faith*!
 What is love, but a divine sparkle
 in the soul? a soul beautified with
 grace, is like a room richly hung
 with Arras, or Tapestry, or the
 Firmament bespangled with glitter-
 ing Stars. These are the *true*
*riches**, which cannot stand with re-
 probation, and is not here enough
 to give the soul *Contentment*? What
 are

* Luke
 16. 11.

are all other things but like the wings of a butterfly, curiously painted? but they defile our fingers. Earthly riches, saith *Augustine*, are full of poverty*; so indeed they are. * *Divitia corporales paupertatis plena sunt.* Aug. For, 1. They cannot enrich the soul. Often-times under silken apparel, there is a thred-bare soul. 2. These are corruptible: *Riches are not for ever*, as the wise man saith *. Hea- * *Prov. 27.24.* ven is a place where gold and silver will not go; a Believer is rich *to- wards God* *, why then art thou dis- * *Luke 12.21.* contented? hath not God given thee that which is better than the world? What if he doth not give thee the box, if he gives thee the Jewel? What if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coyn? he gives thee gold, *viz.* spiritual mercies. What if the *water in the bottle* be spent? thou hast enough in the fountain: what needs he complain of the worlds *Emptiness*, that hath Gods *Fulness*? The Lord is *my portion*, *Psal. 16.4.*

L

saith

saith *David*, then let the lines fall
 where they will, in a *sick bed*, or *prison*;
 I will say, *The lines are fallen unto
 me in pleasant places; yea I have a
 goodly heritage.* 3. Art thou not heir
 to all the promises? hast thou not a
 reversion of heaven? when thou let-
 test go thy hold of natural life, art
 thou not sure of eternal life? hath not
 God given thee the earnest and first-
 fruits of glory? is not here enough
 to work the heart to Contentment?

*What though some have a fraught
 Of Cloves, and Nutmegs, and in Cin-
 namon sail?
 If thou hast wherewithall to spice a
 draught,
 When griefs prevail:*

Herberts
 Poems.

*And for the future time art heir
 To th' Isle of spices; is't not fair?*

SECT.

SECT. III.

The third Argument to Contentation.

The third Argument is, *Be content*, for else we confute our own prayers; We pray, *thy will be done*; It is the will of God that we should be in such a condition; he hath decreed it, and he sees it best for us: Why then do we murmur, and are discontented at that which we pray for? either we are not in good earnest in our prayer, which argues *hypocrisie*; or else we contradict ourselves, which argues *folly*.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Argument to Contentation.

The fourth Argument to Con-
L 2 tentment

contentment is, because now God hath his end, and Satan misseth of his end.

1. *God hath his end.* Gods end in all his crosse Providences, is to bring the heart to submit and be content; and indeed this pleaseth God much; he loves to see his children satisfied with what portion he doth carve and allot them. It contents him to see us contented: Therefore let us acquiesce in Gods Providence; Now God hath his end.

2. *Satan misseth of his end.* The end why the devil (though by Gods permission) did smite *Job*, in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind; he did vex his *body* on purpose, that he might disquiet his *spirit*. He hoped to bring *Job* into a fit of discontent; and then, that he would in a passion break forth against God; but *Job* being so well contented with his condition, as that he falls to *blessing of God*, he did now disappoint
Satan

Satan of his hope. *The Devil shall cast some of you into prison**. Why* Rev. 2. doth the devil throw us into prison? 10.

It is not so much the hurting our body, as the molesting our mind that he aims at; he would imprison our *Contentment*, and disturb the regular motion of our souls; this is the design: 'tis not so much the putting us into a *prison*, as the putting us into a *passion*, that he attempts; but by holy contentation, Satan loseth his prey, he misseth of his end. The devil hath oft deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by *contentation* in the midst of *tentation*; our contentment will discontent Satan. Oh, let us not gratifie our Enemy! Discontent is the Devils *delight*; now it is as he would have it; he loves to warm himself at the fire of our passions. *Repentance* is the joy of the *Angels*, and *discontent* is the joy of the *Devils*? As the Devil danceth at discord, so he sings

at discontent. The fire of our passions makes the Devil a bon-fire; 'tis a kind of heaven to him to see us torturing our selves with our own troubles; but by holy Contentment we frustrate him of his purpose, and do as it were put him out of countenance.

SECT. V.

The fifth Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument is, by Contentment a Christian gets a victory over himself: for a man to be able to rule his own spirit *, this of all others is the most noble conquest *. Passion denotes weakness; to be discontented, is sutable to *flesh* and *blood*; but to be in every state content; reproached, yet *content*; imprisoned, yet *content*; this is above nature; this is some of that holy valour

* *Fortior
est qui se,
quàm qui
fortissima
vincit
mœnia, &c.*

* Prov.

16.32.

lour & chivalry, which only a divine spirit is able to infuse. In the midst of the affronts of the world to be patient, and in the changes of the world to have the spirit calmed; this argues *μεγαλόψυχον δύνον*, as *Homer* speaks; this is a conquest worthy indeed of the Garland of honour. Holy *Job* de-vested and turned out of all, leaving his *Scarlet*, and embracing the *Dung-hill*, (a sad catastrophe!) yet he had learned Contentment. 'Tis said, *He fell upon the ground and worshipped**. One would have thought he should have fallen upon the ground and *blasphemed*; no, he fell and *worshipped*. He adored Gods justice and holiness; behold the strength of grace! here was an humble submission, yet a noble conquest; he got the victory over himself. 'Tis no great matter for a man to yield to his own passions; this is facile and feminine; but to content himself in denying of himself, this is sacred.

* *Job* i.
20.

S E C T. VI.

The sixth Argument to Contentation.

The sixth great Argument to work the heart to Contentment, is the consideration that all Gods providences, how cross or bloody soever; shall do a Believer good; *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God* *. Not only all good things, but all evil things work for good; & shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? Suppose our troubles are twisted together, and sadly accentuated, as the Poet describes it;

* Rom.

8. 28.

πάντα

συνεργούν

ἡς τὸ ἀγαθόν.

δόν.

Littora quot conchas, quot amœna Rosaria flores,

Quotve soporiferum grana papavor, habet:

Sylva feras quot alit, quot piscibus unda natatur,

Et

Et tenerum pennis aera pulsat avis;
Tot premor adversis, &c. Ovid.

What if sickness, poverty, re-
proach, Law-suits, &c. do unite
and muster their forces against us?
All shall work *εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν*, for good;
our *maladies* shall be our *medicines*:
and shall we repine at that which
shall undoubtedly do us good? *Unto*
the upright there ariseth light in dark-
ness *. Affliction may be baptized * Ps. 112.
Marah; 'tis bitter, but *Physical*. Be-
cause this is so full of comfort, and
may be a most excellent *Catholicon*
against discontent; I shall a little ex-
patriate.

Quest. It will be enquired how *Quest.*
the evils of affliction work for good?

R. Several ways.

I. They are *disciplinary*; they *Ans.*
teach us*. The Psalmist having very * *Schola*
elegantly described the Churches *crucis est*
trouble, *Psal.* 74. prefixeth this title *schola lu-*
to the *Psal.*, *לִמְנוּ* which sig-
nifies

nifies a *Psalm* giving instruction; that which seals up instruction, works for good. God puts us sometimes under the *black Rod*; but it is *virga disciplinaris*, a rod of discipline; *Hear ye the rod, and who hath appoint-*

* Mic. 9. 9. *ed it* *. God makes our *Adversity* our *University*: Affliction is a *Preach-*

* Jer. 6. 1. *er, Blow the Trumpet in Tekoah, Jer. 6. 1.* The Trumpet was to preach to the people, as appears, *ver. 6. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem.* Sometimes God speaks to the Minister, to lift up his voice like a *Trum-*
 * Isa. 58. 1. *pet* *; and here he speaks to the Trumpet, to lift up its voice like a *Mini-*
ster. Afflictions teach us,

1. *Humility*: commonly prosperous and proud; *corrections* are Gods *corrosives*, to eat out the proud flesh. Jesus Christ is a *Lilly of the*
 * Cant. 2. 1 *valleys* *; he dwells in an humble heart; God brings us into the valley of tears, that he may bring us into the valley of humility; *Remem-*
bring

bring my affliction, the wormwood and
the gall; my soul hath them still in re-
membrance, and is humbled in me*. *Lam. 3.
When men are grown high, God
hath no better way with them, than
to brew them a cup of wormwood.
Afflictions are compared to thorns*. *Hof. 2. 8,
Gods thorns are to prick the blad-
der of pride. Suppose a man run at
another with a sword to kill him, ac-
cidentally it only lets out his im-
postume: this doth him good. Gods
sword is to let out the impostume of
pride: and shall that which makes us
bungle, make us discontented?

2. Afflictions teach us Repen-
tance; *Thou hast chastised me, and I
was chastised, I repented; and after
I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh*
Ec. * Repentance is the pretious* Jer. 31.
fruit that grows upon the Cross. 18, 19.
When the fire is put under the Still;
the water drops from the Roses: fie-
ry afflictions make the waters of re-
pentance drop and distill from the
eyes

eyes, and is here any cause of discontent?

3. Afflictions teach us to pray better*: *They poured out a Prayer when thy chastening was upon them* *. Before they would say a prayer; now they poured out a prayer; *Vigilabat*

* *Mala quæ hic nos premunt, ad Deum confugere faciunt.*

* *Isa. 26. 16* *in ceto, qui stertebat in navi*; *Jonah* was asleep in the ship, but awake and at prayer in the *Whales belly*. When God puts under the firebrands of affliction, now our hearts boyl over the more; God loves to have his children possessed with a *spirit of prayer*. Never did *David, the sweet singer of Israel*, tune his Harp more melodiously; never did he pray better, than when he was *upon the waters*. Thus afflictions do *indiscipline*, and shall we be discontented at that which is for our good?

* *Psal. 66. 10, 11.*

2. Afflictions are *probatory* *. Gold is not the worse for being tryed, or Corn for being fanned. Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity, it tryes

tries what metal we are made of; affliction is Gods *fan* and his *sieve*. 'Tis good that men be known; some serve God for a *livery*; they are like the fisherman that makes use of his net, only to catch the fish: So they go a fishing with the net of Religion, only to catch preferment; Affliction discovers these. The *Donatists* went to the *Goths*, when the *Arians* prevailed; Hypocrites will not sail in a storm; true grace holds out in the *winter season*. That is a *pretious faith*, which, like the star, shines brightest in the darkest night. 'Tis good that our graces should be brought to a trial; thus we have the comfort, and the Gospel the honour; and why then discontented?

3. Afflictions they are *expurgatory*; these evils work for good, because they work not sin; and shall I be discontented at this? what if I have more *trouble*, if I have *less* sin? the brightest day hath its clouds, the purest

purest gold its dross, the most refined soul hath some lees of corruption. The Saints lose nothing in the furnace, but what they can well spare, *their dross*: is not this for our good? why then should we murmur? *I am come to send fire on the earth**, Tertullian understands it of the fire of affliction. God makes this like the fire of the three children, which burned only their bonds, and set them at liberty in the furnace: So the fire of affliction serves to burn the bonds of iniquity. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged: and this is all the fruit, to take away* *his sin**. When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away his *soul*; when it comes to a godly man, it only takes away his *sin*: is there then any cause why we should be discontented? God steeps us in the brinish water of affliction, that he may take out our spots. Gods people are his husband-ry*;

* Luke
12.49.

* II. 27. 9.

* I Cor.
3. 6.

ry; the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods; Gods ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of sin, his harrowing of us is to break the hard clods of impenitency, that the heart may be the fitter to receive the seed of grace; and if this be all, why should we be discontented?

4. Afflictions do both exercise and increase grace.

First, they *Exercise* grace: affliction doth breathe our graces; every thing is most in its excellency, when it is most in its exercise. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be *asleep*, & hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers, or the Sun when it is masked with a cloud? a sick man is *living*, but not *lively*; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to see grace in the eclipse. Now faith puts forth its purest

purest and most noble acts in times of affliction : God makes *the fall of the leaf the spring* of our Graces. What if we are more *passive*, if grace be more active ?

2. Afflictions do *increase* grace : as the wind serves to encrease and blow up the flame ; so do the windy blasts of affliction augment & blow up our graces : grace spends in the furnace, but it is like the *widows oyl in the cruse*, which did encrease by pouring out. The torch when it is beaten, burns brightest, so doth grace when it is exercised by sufferings. Sharp frosts nourish the good Corn, so do sharp afflictions grace ; some plants grow better in the shade than in the Sun : as the *Bay* and the *Cypress*. The shade of adversity is better for some, than the Sun-shine of prosperity. *Naturalists* observe, that the *Colewort* thrives better when it is watered with salt water, than with fresh ; so do some thrive better in the salt water

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of affliction; and shall we be discontented at that which makes us grow and fructifie more?

5. These afflictions do bring more of Gods immediate presence into the soul. When we are most assaulted, we shall be most assisted, *I will be with him in trouble* *. It cannot be ill with * *Pf. 9. 15.* that man, with whom God is by his powerful presence in supporting, and his gracious presence in sweetning the present tryal. God will be with us in trouble, not only to *behold* us, but to *uphold* us; as he was with *Daniel* in the *Lyons den*, and the three children *in the furnace*. What if we have more trouble than others, if we have more of God with us than others have? we never have sweeter smiles from Gods face, than when the world begins to look strange; *Thy statutes have been my songs*, where? not when I was upon the throne, but *in the house of my Pilgrimage* *. We * *Pf. 119.* read, *The Lord was not in the wind*, 54.

M

nor

• 1 Kings
12.11.

*nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire**; but in a metaphorical and spiritual sense: when the wind of affliction blows upon a Believer, God is in the wind; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, viz. to sanctifie, to support, to sweeten. If God be with us, the furnace shall be turned into a festival, the prison into a Paradise, the earthquake into a joyful dance. Oh what should I be discontented, when I have more of Gods company?

6. These evils of affliction are for good, as they bring with them Certificates of Gods love, and are evidences of his special favour. Affliction is the Saints livery, 'tis a badge and cognizance of honour; That the God of glory should look upon a worm, and take so much notice of him, as to afflict him rather than lose him, is an high act of Favour. Gods rod is *Sceptrum Regale*; a Scepter of dignity. Job calls
Gods

Gods afflicting of us, *his magnifying* of us*. Some mens prosperity hath * Job 7. been their shame, when others affliction hath been their crown. 17.

7. These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us *a far more exceeding weight of glory**. That * 2 Cor. which works for my glory in heaven, 4.16. works for my good; we do not read in Scripture that any mans honour and riches do work for him *a weight of glory*, but afflictions do; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory; not that our sufferings do merit glory (as the Papists do wickedly gloss) but though they are not *causa*, they are *via*; they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it, and God makes us as he did our Captain, *perfect through sufferings**; and shall * Heb. 2. 10 not all this make us contented with our condition? Oh I beseech you

look not upon the *evil* of affliction, but the *good*. Afflictions in Scripture, are called *visitations* *, the word in the Hebrew פקד to *visit*, is taken in a *good* sense as well as a *bad*: Gods afflictions are but *friendly visits*; behold here Gods rod is like *Aarons rod* blossoming, and *Jonathans rod*; it hath honey at the end of it. Poverty shall starve our sins *; the sickness of the body shall cure a sick soul: O then instead of murmuring and being discontented, *bless the Lord*; hadst thou not met with such a rub in the way, thou mightest have gone to hell and never stop'd.

* *Felix*
paupertas,
beata mi-
seria.

SECT. VII.

The seventh Argument to Contentment.

The next Argument to Contentment is, consider the evil of discontent.

tent. Male-content hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man? sometimes he will sit upon his bed, by and by he will lye down, and when he is down, he is not quiet; first he turns to one side, and then to the other, he is restless: this is just the emblem of a discontented spirit, the man is not sick, yet he is never well, sometimes he likes such a condition of life, and when he hath it, yet he is not pleased, he is soon weary; and then another condition of life; this is *an evil under the Sun*.

Now the evil of Discontent appears in three things.

Evil of discontent.

1. The *sordidness* of it, it is unworthy of a Christian.

First, it is unworthy of his profession. It was the saying of an Hea-then; Bear thy condition quietly, *nosce te esse hominem*, know thou art

166 *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

* *Fer man- a man* *: So I say, Bear thy condition contentedly, *nosce te esse Christianum*, know thou art a *Christian*. Thou professest to live by faith; what, and not content? Faith is a grace that doth *substantiate* things
sue te fortunam tuam, nosce te esse hominem.
 Tull.

Heb. 11.1. *not seen* *, faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promises, faith lives not by *bread alone*. When the water is spent in the *bottle*, faith knows whither to have recourse: now to see a Christian dejected in the want of visible supplies, and recruits, where is faith? Oh, faith one, my estate in the world is down, I, and which is worse, thy faith is down. Wilt thou not be contented, unless God let down the vessel to thee, as he did to *Peter*, wherein were all manner of *beasts of the earth*,

Act. 10.12 *and fowls of the air* *? must you have first and second course? this is like *Thomas*, *unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe* *. So, unless thou hast a sensible

* Joh. 20.
25.

able feeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content, True faith will *trust* God where it cannot *trace* him, and will adventure upon Gods *bond*, though it hath nothing in view. You who are discontented because you have not all you would, let me tell you, either your faith is a *non entity*, or at best but an *embrio*; 'tis a *weak faith* that must have stilts and crutches to support it: Nay, discontent is not only below faith, but below reason; why are you discontented? is it because you are dispossessed of such comforts? well, and have you not reason to guide you? doth not reason tell you, that you are but *tenants at will*? and may not God turn you out when he please? You hold not your estate *jure*, but *gratis*; not by a juridical right, but upon favour and courtesie.

2. It is unworthy of the *relation* we stand in to God; a Christian is invested with the title & priviledge

*Eph. 1.5. of *sonship**; he is an heir of the Promise: Oh consider, the lot of free grace is fallen upon thee, thou art nearly allied to Christ, and of the blood royal; thou art advanced, in some sense, above the Angels, *why then art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day**? 2 Sam. 13.4. Why art thou discontented? O how unworthy is this? as if the heir to some great Monarch should go pining up and down, because he may not pick such a flower,

The second evil of discontent.

2. Consider the *sinfulness* of it; which appears in three things,

The causes
The concomitants } of it.
The consequences }

I. It is sinful in the *causes*; which are these.

1. *Pride*. He that thinks highly of his desert, usually esteems meanly of his condition; a discontented man

Pro- man is a proud man, he thinks him-
 free self *better* than others; therefore
 art finds fault with the wisdom of God
 the that he is not *above* o-
 ; in thers*. Thus the thing
 rhy formed saith to him that
 on, formed it, *Why hast thou*
 .4. made me thus*? Why
 ow am I not higher? Discontents are
 to nothing else but the æstuations and
 pi-boilings over of pride.

2. The second cause of discontent
 is envy, which *Augustine* calls *viti-
 um diabolicum*, the sin of the devil.
 Satan envied *Adam* the glory of
 Paradise, and the robe of innocency:
 he that envies what his neighbour
 hath, is never contented with that
 portion which Gods providence
 doth parcel out to him*; as envy stirs
 up *strife*, (this made the Plebeian
 faction so strong amongst the Ro-
 mans) so it creates *discontent*; the
 envious man looks so much upon the
 blessings which another enjoys, that

* *Nec quenquam jam ferre
 potest Cæsare priorem
 Pompeiusve parem*—
 Lucan l. 1. Pharsal.

* Rom. 9.
 20.

* *Fertilior
 seges est a-
 lienis sem-
 per in agris.
 Vicinumq;
 pecus gran-
 dius uber
 habet. O-
 vid.*

he

he cannot see his own mercies, and so doth continually vex and torture himself. *Cain* envied that his brothers sacrifice was accepted, and his rejected, hereupon he was discontented, and presently murderous thoughts began to arise in his heart.

3. The third cause is *Covetousness*. This is a radical sin. Whence are vexing Law-suits, but from discontent? and whence is discontent, but from covetousness? *Covetousness* and *contentedness* cannot dwell in the same heart. *Avarice* is an *helluo*, that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like *Behemoth*; *Behold, he drinketh up a river, he trusteth that he*
 * Job 40. *can draw up Jordan into his mouth* *.
 23. There are four things (saith *Solomon*) say, *It is not enough*, I may add a fifth, *The heart of a covetous man*, he is still craving. Covetousness is like a Wolf in the breast, which is ever feeding; and because a man is not satisfied, he is never content.

4. The

4. The fourth cause of Discontent is *jealousie*, which is sometimes occasioned through melancholly, and sometimes misapprehension. The spirit of jealousie causeth *this evil spirit*. Jealousie is the rage of a man*, * Prov. 6. 34. and oft, this is nothing but *suspicion* and *fancy*, yet such as creates real discontent.

5. The fifth cause of discontent is *distrust*, which is a great degree of Atheism. The discontented person is ever distrustful. *The bill of provision* grows low; I am in these straits and exigences, can God help me? *Can he prepare a Table in the Wilderness?* sure he cannot. My estate is exhausted, can God recruit me? My friends are gone, can God raise me up more? sure the arm of his power is shrunk. I am like the *dry fleece*, can any water come upon this fleece? *If the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be?** Thus the *Anchor of Hope*, and * 1 Kings 7.2. the

the shield of faith being cast away, the soul goes pining up and down.

Discontent is nothing else but the *Echo* of unbelief; and remember *dis-trust* is worse than *distress*.

2. 2. Discontent is evil in the concomitants of it which are two.

1. Discontent is joined with a *sullen melancholly*; A Christian of a right temper, should be ever chearful in God; *serve the Lord with gladness* *. A sign the oyl of grace hath been poured into the heart, when *the oyl of gladness* shines in the countenance. Chearfulness credits Religion; how can the discontented person be chearful? Discontent is a dogged sullen humour; because we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good word or look from us; as the bird in the cage, because she is pent up, and cannot fly into the open air, therefore beats her self against the cage, and is ready to kill her self. Thus that peevish Prophet;

phet; *I do well to be angry to the death* *.

* *Jonah 4.*

2. Discontent is accompanied with *unthankfulness*; because we have not all we desire, we never mind the mercies which we have: we deal with God, as the woman of *Sarepta* did with the Prophet; the Prophet *Elijah* had been a means to keep her alive in the famine; for it was for his sake, that her *meal in the barrel*, and her *oyl in the cruse* failed not; but as soon as ever her Son dies, she falls into a passion, and begins to quarrel with the Prophet; *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my Son* *? So un- * *1 King. 17. 18.*
gratefully we deal with God: we can be content to receive mercies From God, but if he doth cross us in the least thing, then through discontent, we grow techy and impatient, and are ready to flie upon God? thus God loseth all his mercies*,

* Φαῦλα ἂν ἦς πί-
δοι δὲ τετραμ-
μῆος, εἰς δὲ ἀπάσας.
Ἀντλῶν τὰς χάρι-
τας εἰς κενὸν ἐξέ-
χας. *Lucian Epigr.*

* 2 Chro. 20. 30.

* *Ingratus
vitandus*

*est ut di-
rum scelus,
nec cogita-
ri pestilen-
tius potest;
nam tellus
ipsa foedius
nihil creat.*

*Pet. Crini-
tus l. 2.*

Poem.

* *Qui occi-
dit patrem
plurima
committit
peccata in
anno.*

cies *. We read in Scripture
of the *thank-offering* *. The
discontented person cuts
God short of this; the Lord
loseth his *thank-offering*.

A discontented Christian repines in
the midst of mercies, as *Adam*, who
fin'd in the midst of *paradise*. Discon-
tent is a spider that sucks the poison
of unthankfulness out of the sweet-
est flower of Gods blessings; and by a
devilish chymistry extracts dross out
of the most refined gold. The dis-
contented person thinks every thing
he doth for God too much, and eve-
ry thing God doth for him too little.
Oh what a sin is unthankfulness *! it
is an accumulative sin. What
Cicero saith of *Paricide* *, I may say
of *Ingratitude*; there are many sins
bound up in this one sin; it is a vo-
luminous wickedness; and how full
of this sin is *Discontent*? A discon-
tented Christian, because he hath
not all the world, therefore disho-
nours

nours God with the mercies which he hath. God made *Eve* out of *Adams* rib, to be an *helper* (as the Father speaks;) but the Devil made an arrow of this rib, and shot *Adam* to the heart: So doth discontent take the rod of Gods mercy, and ungratefully shoot at him: Estate, Liberty, shall be employed against God. Thus it is oftentimes. Behold then how Discontent and Ingratitude are interwoven and twisted one within another: thus discontent is sinful in its concomitants.

3. It is sinful in its *Consequences*; which are these;

1. It makes a man very unlike the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is a *meek spirit*. The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a *Dove**. A Dove is the emblem of meekness. A discontented spirit is not a meek spirit.

2. It makes a man like the Devil. The Devil being swell'd with the poyson

3.
Discontent is sinful in its consequences.

1.
*Mat. 3. 6:

2.

176 / *The Art of Divine Contentment.*

poyson of envy and malice; is never content: Just so is the Male-content.

The devil is an unquiet spirit, he is
 *Pct. 5. 8. still *walking about**; 'tis his rest to be walking: And herein is the discontented person like him; for he goes up and down vexing himself. *seeking rest, and finding none*, he is the Devils picture.

3.

3. Discontent disjoins the soul, it untunes the heart for duty; *Is any*

*Jam. 5.
 13.

*man afflicted let him pray**. But, is any man *Discontented*; how shall he pray? *lift up pure hands without wrath**. Discontent is full of wrath

*1 Tim.
 5. 8.

and passion; The Male-content cannot lift up pure hands; he lifts up *leprous hands*; he poisons his prayers; will God accept of a poisoned sacrifice; *Chrysostom* compares prayer to a fine Garland, Those saith he, that make a Garland, their hands had need be clean; Prayer is a pretious Garland, the heart that makes it had need be clean: Discontent throws

poison

poison in the spring, (which was death among the *Romans*.) Discontent puts the heart into a disorder and mutiny, and such a one cannot serve the Lord *without distraction*.

4. Discontent sometimes unfits for the very use of reason; *Jonah* in a passion of discontent, spake no better than blasphemy, and non-sense; *I do well*, said he, *to be angry to the death**. What? to be angry with* *Jon. 4. 8*, God; and to die for anger? sure he did not know well what he said, When discontent transports, then like *Moses*, we speak *unadvisedly with our lips*. This humour doth even suspend the very acts of reason.

5. Discontent doth not only disquiet a mans self, but those who are near him. This evil spirit troubles *Families, Parishes, &c.* If there be but one string out of tune, it spoils all the musick. One discontented spirit makes jarrings and discords among

mong others: 'Tis this ill humour that breeds quarrels and Law-suits. Whence is all our *Contention* but for want of *Contentation*? From whence come wars and fightings among you?

* Jam. 4. 1. *come they not hence even of your lusts**? in particular from this *lust* of Discontent? Why did *Absalom* raise a War against his Father, and would have taken off not only his *Crown*, but his *Head*? was it not his discontent? *Absalom* would be King. Why did *Ahab* stone *Naboth*? was it not discontent about the Vine-yard? Oh this devil of discontent! Thus you have seen the sinfulness of it.

3.
The simplicity of
it.
* Ps. 9. 6.

3. Consider the simplicity of it. I may say as the Psalmist, *Surely they are disquieted in vain**: which appears thus.

1. Is it not a vain simple thing to be troubled at the loss of that which is in its own nature perishing and changeable? God hath put a vicissitude

itude into the creature; all the world
rings changes: and for me to meet
with inconstancy here, to lose a
friend, estate, to be in a constant
fluctuation, is no more than to see a
flower wither, or a leaf drop off in
Autumn. There is an *Autumn* upon
every comfort, *a fall of the leaf*; Now
it is extream folly to be discontented
at the loss of those things which *are*
in their own nature loseable. What
Solomon saith of *Riches*, is true of all
things under the Sun, *They take*
wings. *Noah's Dove* brought an O-
live-branch in its mouth; but pre-
sently flew out of the Ark, and never
returned more: Such a comfort
brings to us honey in its mouth; but
it hath wings; and to what purpose
should we be troubled, unless we
had wings to flie after and overtake
it?

2. Discontent is an heart-break-
ing; *by sorrow of the heart the spi-** Prov. 25.
*rit is broken**; It takes away the¹³.

comfort of life. There is none of us but have many mercies if we can see them; now because we have not all we desire, therefore we will lose the comfort of that which we have already. *Jonah* having his Gourd smitten (a withering vanity,) was so discontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the Whales belly; he takes no comfort of his life, but wisheth that he might die. What folly is this? We must have all or none; herein we are like children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, because they may have no bigger. Discontent eats out the comfort of life. Besides, it were well if it were seriously weighed how prejudicial this is even to our health: For discontent, as it doth discruciate the mind, so it doth pine the body; it frets as a moth, and by wasting the spirits, weakens the vitals; The pluriſie of Discontent brings the body
into

into a consumption ; and is not this Folly ?

3. Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but makes the Cross heavier. A contented spirit goes chearfully under its affliction. Discontent makes our grief as unsupportable, as it is unreasonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain ; but if the leg be sore, then the fetter troubles. Discontent of mind is the *sore* that makes the Fetters of affliction more grievous. Discontent troubles us more than the trouble it self, it steeps the affliction in Wormwood. When Christ was upon the Cross, the Jews brought him *Gall and Vinegar* to drink, that it might add to his sorrow. Discontent brings to a man in affliction gall and vinegar to drink, this is worse than the affliction it self. Is it not folly for a man to im-bitter his own cross ?

4. Discontent spins out our
N 3 troubles

troubles the longer. A Christian is discontented because he is in want; and therefore he is in want, because he is discontented; he murmurs because he is afflicted; and therefore he is afflicted, because he murmurs. Discontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deals herein with us, as we use to do with our children; when they are quiet and cheerful, they shall have any thing: but if we see them cry and fret, then we with-hold from them: We get nothing from God by our discontent, but blows. The more the child struggles, the more it is beaten: When we struggle with God by our sinful passions, he doubles and trebles his strokes; God will tame our curst hearts. What got *Israel* by their peevishness? they were within eleven days journey of *Canaan*, and now they were discontented, and began to murmur; God leads them a march of forty years long in the wilder-

wilderness. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have seen the evil of discontent. I have been long upon this Argument; but *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis dicitur.*

S E C T. VIII.

The eighth Argument to Contentment.

The next Argument or motive to Contentment is this ; why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? perhaps if he had more, he would be less content; covetousness is a dry drunkenness. The world is such, that the more we have, the more we *crave**; it cannot fill the heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? not by putting oyl to the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdrawing

** Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.*

N 4 ing

ing the fuel. When the appetite is enflam'd after riches, how may a man be satisfied? not by having just what he desires, but by withdrawing the *fuel*, &c. moderating and lessening his desires. He that is contented hath enough. A man in a fever or dropie, thirsts; how do you satisfy him? not by giving him liquid things which will enflame his thirst the more, but by removing the cause, and so curing his distemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his heart lower.

S E C T. IX.

The Ninth Argument to Contentation.

The next Argument to Contentment is, *The shortness of life*. It is but

but a vapour, saith James *. *ἡ βίη* * Jam. 4.
τοῦ χρόνου *, life is a wheel ever running. * *Πνεῦμα*
 The Poets painted Time with wings, *καὶ στίχα.*
 to shew the volubility and swiftness *Sophocles.*
 of it. Job compares it to a swift ** Phocylides.*
Post *, (our life rides post) and a day, * Job 9. 25
 not a year. It is indeed like a day.
 Infancy is as it were the *day-break*,
 Youth is the Sun-rising, full growth
 is the Sun in the Meridian, old age
 is Sun-setting. *Sickness* is the even-
 ing, then comes the *night* of death.
 How quick is this day of life
 spent? oftentimes this Sun goes
 down at noon-day; life ends before
 the evening of old age comes; Nay,
 sometimes the Sun of life sets pre-
 sently after Sun-rising. Quickly after
 the dawning of Infancy, the night of
 death approaches. Oh, how short is
 the life of man! The consideration
 of the brevity of life may work the
 heart to contentment. Remember
 thou art to be here but a day; *parum*
vivis, quid multum viatici? thou hast
 but

* *Quid o-
pus est ad
brevem vi-
tam longis
opibus?*
Hyper.

but a short way to go, and what needs a long provision for a short way *? If a Traveller have but enough to bring him to his journies end, he desires no more. We have but a day to live, & perhaps we may be in the twelfth hour of the day; why, if God give us but enough to bear our charges till night, it is sufficient. Let us be content. If a man let the Lease of an house or Farm, but for two or three days, and he should fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiscreet? So when we have but a short time here, and death calls us presently off the stage; to thirst immoderately after the world, and pull down our souls to build up an estate, is it not extream folly? Therefore as *Esa* said once in a *profane sense*, concerning his birth-right; *Lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birth-right do to me?* So let a Christian say in a *Religious sense*; *Lo, I am even*

even at the point of death, my grave
is going to be made, and what good
will the world do me? If I have but
enough till *Sun-setting*, I am con-
tent.

SECT. X.

*The tenth Argument to Conten-
tation.*

The tenth Argument or Motive
to Contentment is; Consider seri-
ously the nature of a prosperous
condition. There are in a prosperous
estate three things.

I. *Plus molestia*, more trouble. I. *Plus molestia*.
Many who have abundance of all
things to enjoy, yet have not so
much content and sweetness in their
lives, as some that go to their hard
labour. Sad, solicitous thoughts
do often attend a prosperous condi-
tion; *Care* is the *malus genius*, or e-
vil

vil spirit which haunts the rich man, and will not suffer him to be quiet. When his chest is full of gold, his heart is full of care, either how to manage, or how to encrease, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Oh the troubles and perplexities that do wait upon prosperity! The world's high-seats are very uneasie; Sun-shine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorches with its heat; the Bee gives honey, but sometimes it stings: Prosperity hath its sweetness, and also its sting. Competency with Contentment is far more eligible. Never did Jacob sleep better than when he had the heavens for his Canopy, and an hard stone for his pillow. A large voluminous estate is but like a long trailing Garment, which is more troublesome than useful.

2. *Plus periculi.*

2. In a prosperous condition there is *plus periculi*, more danger; and that two ways.

First, *Ex parte ipsius*, in respect

of a mans self. The rich mans Table
 is oft his snare; he is ready to in-
 gulph himself too deep in these
 sweet waters*. In this sense it is hard
 to know how to abound. It must be
 a strong brain that bears heady
 wine; he had need have much wis-
 dom and grace that knows how to
 bear an high condition; either he is
 ready to kill himself with care, or
 surfeit himself upon luscious de-
 lights. Oh the hazard of honour,
 the damage of dignity! Pride, Se-
 curity, Rebellion, are the three
 worms that breed of plenty*. The
 pastures of prosperity are rank and
 surfeiting. How soon are we bro-
 ken upon the soft pillow of ease*?
 Prosperity is often a trumpet that
 sounds a retreat, it calls men off
 from the pursuit of Religion. The
 Sun of prosperity oft dulleth, and puts
 out the fire of zeal. How many
 souls hath the pluriſie of abundance
 kill'd*? They that will be rich, fall
 into

* Magna
 felicitatis
 est à feli-
 citate non
 vinci.
 Aug. de
 verb. Dom.
 c. 13.

* Deut. 32.

15.

* Πλοῦς
 γὰρ ἡ πει-
 ρασὶς ἐκ-
 τερχηλά-
 ζει ἢ ὅτι
 δόξα.
 Theophy-
 lact.

* Plurimè
 sunt qui.

paupertate positi non habent patientiam; & qui abundantiam non habent temperantiam.
 Remigius.
 * 1 Tim. 6. 10.

into snares *. The world is bird-
 lime at our feet, it is full of Golden
 sands, but they are quick-sands. Pro-
 sperity like smooth Jacob, will sup-
 plant and betray; a great estate with-
 out much vigilancy will be a thief
 to rob us of heaven; such as are upon
 the pinnacle of honour, are in most
 danger of falling.

*Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens
 Pinus, & celsæ graviore casu
 Decidunt turres, feriuntque summos
 Fulmina montes, &c.*

Hor. carm. l. 2. Od. 10.

A lower estate is less hazardous.
 The little Pinnacle rides safe by the
 Shore, when the gallant ship ad-
 vancing with its mast and top-sail, is
 cast away. *Homo victus in Paradiso,
 victor in stercore.* Adam in Paradise
 was overcome, when Job on the
 dung-hill was a conquerour. Samp-
 son fell asleep on Delilah's lap: Some
 have

have fallen so fast asleep on the lap of ease and plenty, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell *. The worlds *fawning* is worse * *Turpi* than its *frowning*; and it is more to be feared when it smiles, than when it thunders *. Prosperity in Scripture is compared to a candle: *Job* 29. 3. *When his candle shined upon my head.* How many have burnt their wings about this candle! *Segetem ubertas nimia sternit, rami onere franguntur, ad maturitatem non pervenit nimia fecunditas* *. The corn being over-ripe sheds, and fruit when it mellow, begins to rot; When men do mellow with the Sun of prosperity, commonly their souls begin to rot in sin. *How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* *. His golden weights keep him from ascending up the hill of God; and shall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower Orb? What if we are not

in

** Turpi
fregerunt
sacula luxu
Divitia
molles, &c.
Juv. 6.
Sat.*

** Pericu-
losior est
mundus
blandiens
quam ful-
minans.*

*Aug.
* Sen. ad
Lucilium.
Ep. 80.*

** Luk. 18.
24.*

in so much bravery, and gallantry as others? we are not in so much danger; as we want the honour of the world, so the temptations. Oh the abundance of danger that is in abundance! We see by common experience that *Lunaticks*, when the Moon is declining, and in the wane, are sober enough, but when it is in the full, they are more wild and exorbitant: When mens estates are in the wane, they are more serious about their souls, more humble; but when it is the *full of the Moon*, and they have abundance, then their hearts begin to swell with their estates, and are scarce themselves. Those that write concerning the several *Climates*, observe that such as live in the Northern parts of the world, if you bring them into the South part, they lose their stomachs, and die quickly; but those that live in the more Southern hot *Climates*, bring them into the North

North, and their stomachs mend, and they are long lived: Give me leave to apply it; bring a man from the cold starving climate of poverty, into the hot southern climate of prosperity, and he begins to lose his appetite to good things, he grows weak, and a thousand to one if all his Religion doth not die; but bring a Christian from the South to the North, from a rich flourishing estate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry air, and then his stomach mends, he hath better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Christ, he thirsts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life, than at six before; this man is now like to live and hold out in his Religion; be content then with a *modicum*; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to heaven, it sufficeth.

2. A prosperous condition is
O dangerous

dangerous *ex parte vicini*, in regard of others : a great estate for the

* Gen. 26. most part draws * envy to it *,
12, 13, 14.
* Felicitas whereas in *parvis quies*. David a
semper sub- Shepherd was quiet ; but David a
jesta est Courtier was pursued by his ene-
invidia. mies : envy cannot endure a supe-
Laert. Di- rior : an envious man knows not
ogenes de how to live, but upon the ruines of
vit. Philos. his neighbour ; he raiseth himself
higher by bringing others lower.

Prosperity is an eye-sore to many. Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleeced. The barren tree grows peaceably ; no man meddles with the Ash or Willow ; but the Apple-tree and the Damasin shall have many rude Sutors. Oh then be content to carry a lesser sail ; he that hath less *revenues*, hath less *envy* ; such as bear the fairest frontispiece, and make the greatest show in the world, are the *white* for envy and malice to shoot at.

3. *Plus re-
cessionis.*

3. A prosperous condition hath in
it

it *plus recensionis*, a greater reckoning; every man must be responsible for his talents. Thou that hast great possessions in the world, dost thou trade thy estate for Gods glory? Art thou *rich in good works*? Art thou a *κοινὸν ἀγαθόν*; Grace makes a *private person* a *common good*. Dost thou disburse thy money for publick uses? it is lawful (in this sense) to put out our money to use. Oh let us all remember, an estate is a *depositum*: we are but stewards, and our Lord and Master will ere long say, *Give an account of your stewardship*: the greater our estate, the greater *our charge*: the more our revenues, the more our reckonings. You that have a lesser Mill going in the world, be content; God will expect less from you, where he hath sowed more sparingly.

SECT. XI.

The eleventh Argument to Contentation.

The eleventh Argument is the example of those who have been eminent for Contentation. *Examples* are usually more forcible than *Precepts*. *Abraham* being call'd out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bids him offer up his Son *Isaac* *; this was a great work: *Isaac* was *filius senectutis*, the Son of his old age; *filius dilectionis*, the son of his love; *filius promissi*, the son of the promise: Christ the Messiah was to come of his line, *In Isaac shall thy seed be blessed*; so that to offer up *Isaac*, seemed not only to oppose *Abraham's* reason, but his *faith* too; for if *Isaac* die, the world (for ought he knew)

* Gen. 22.
2.

knew) must be without a Mediatour:
 Besides, If *Isaac* be sacrificed, was
 there no other hand to do it but *A-*
brahams? must the Father needs be
 the executioner? must he that was
 the Instrument of giving *Isaac* his
 being, be the Instrument of taking it
 away? yet *Abraham* doth not dispute
 or hesitate, but believes against *hope*,
 and is content with Gods prescripti-
 on. So, when God call'd him to
 leave *his country* *, he was content. * Heb. 11.
 Some would have argued thus: what? 1.
 leave all my friends, my native soil,
 my brave situation, and go turn
 pilgrim? *Abraham* is content: be-
 sides *Abraham* went blindfold, *he*
knew not whither he went *. God * Vers. 8.
 held him in suspense, he must go
 wander he knows not where; and
 when he doth come to the place God
 had laid out for him, he knows not
 what oppositions he shall meet with
 there; the world doth seldom cast a
 favourable aspect upon strangers *, * Gen. 32.
 yet 16.

yet he is content, and obeys; *He so-*
 * Heb. II. *journed in the land of promise**; behold
 9. a little his pilgrimage. First, he goes
 to *Charan*, a City in *Mesopotamia*;
 when he had sojourn'd there a while
 his Father dies; then he removes to
Sichem, then to *Bethlem* in *Canaan*;
 there a famine ariseth; *then* he went
 down to *Egypt*; after that he returns
 into *Canaan*, when he came there ('tis
 true he had a promise) but he found
 nothing to answer expectation; he
 had not there one foot of Land, but
 was an exile: in this time of his so-
 journing he buried his wife; & as for
 his dwellings, he had no sumptuous
 buildings, but led his life in poor
 cottages; all this was enough to have
 broken any mans heart. *Abraham*
 might think thus with himself, is
 this the land I must possess? here is no
 probability of any good; *all things are*
against me: well, is he discontented?
 no; God saith to him, *Abraham* go,
 leave thy Country; and this word

was

was enough to lead him all the world
 over; he is presently upon his march;
 here was a man had learned to be
 content. But let us descend a little
 lower, to Heathen * Zeno (of whom
 Seneca speaks) who had once been
 very rich, hearing of a shipwrack, &
 that all his goods were drowned at
 Sea; Fortune saith he (he spake in an
 heathen dialect) hath dealt well with
 me; and would have me now to stu-
 dy Philosophy *; he was content to
 change his course of life, to leave off
 being a Merchant, and turn Philoso-
 pher. And if an Heathen said thus,
 shall not a Christian much more
 say, when the world is drained from
 him, *Jubet Deus mundum derelinque-
 re & Christum expeditus sequi*, God
 would have me leave off following
 the world, and study Christ more,
 and how to get to Heaven? Do I see
 an Heathen contented, and a Chri-
 stian disquieted*? How did Heathens
 vilifie those things which Christians

* Socrates
*Philosopho-
 rum lucu-
 lentissimus
 pauper
 semper nu-
 dis pedi-
 bus ince-
 dens, sor-
 dido palli-
 o contem-
 tus honores
 omniaq;
 terrena
 contem-
 nens, Plut.
 * Jubet me
 fortuna ex-
 peditus
 Philoso-
 phari.
 Seneca.
 * Pudeat,
 pudeat illos
 nomine te-
 nus Chri-
 stianos qui-
 bus quod
 ad hanc
 rem atti-
 net, Eth-
 nici resti-
 us sapue-
 runt. Hyp.*

magnifie? though they knew not God, or what true happiness meant, yet would speak very sublimely of a *Numen* or Deity, and of the life to come, as *Aristotle* and *Plato*; and for those Elizian delights which they did but fancy, they undervalued and contemned the things here below; it was the doctrine they taught their Scholars, and which some of them practised, that *men should strive to be contented with a little*; they were willing to make an exchange; to have less good, and more learning: and shall not we be content then to have less of the world, so we may have more of Christ? May not Christians blush to see Heathens content with a *viaticum*, so much as would recruit nature, and to see themselves so transported with the love of earthly things, that if they begin a little to abate, and the *bill of provision* grows short, they murmur, and are like *Micah*, *Have ye taken away*
my

my gods, and do ye ask me what I
 ail*? Have Heathens gone so far *Judg.18;
 in contentation? and is it not sad for^{24.}
 us to come short of them that came
 short of Heaven? These *Heroes* of
 their time, how did they embrace
 death it self? *Socrates* died in pri-
 son, *Hercules* was burnt alive, *Cato*
 (whom *Seneca* calls, * the lively **Virtutem*
 image and portraicture of virtue) *viva ima-*
 thrust through with a sword; but *go. Sen.*
 how bravely, and with what con-
 tentment of spirit did they die? shall
 I, saith *Seneca*, weep for *Cato*, or *Re-*
gulus, or the rest of those Worthies
 that died with so much valour and
 patience? Did not cross providen-
 ces make them to alter their counte-
 nance, and do I see a Christian ap-
 palled and amazed? Did not death
 affright them? and doth it distract
 us? Did the spring-head of Nature
 rise so high? and shall not Grace, like
 the *waters of the Sanctuary*, rise high-
 er? We that pretend to live by faith
 may

may we not go to School to them who had no other Pilot but reason to guide them? nay, let me come a step lower, to creatures void of reason; we see every creature is contented with its allowance; the beasts with their provender, the birds with their nests, they live only upon providence; and shall we make our selves below them? let a Christian go to School to the Ox & the Ass, to learn contentedness; we think we never have enough, and are still laying up, the fowls of the air do not lay up, *they reap not, nor gather into barns* *; it is an argument which Christ brings, to make Christians contented with their condition; The birds do not lay up, yet they are provided for, and are contented; *Are ye not* (saith Christ) *much better than they?* but if you are discontented, are ye not much worse than they? let these examples quicken us.

* Mat. 6:
26.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Argument to Contentation.

The twelfth argument to Contentment is ; Whatever change or trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the hell he shall have. Whatever eclipse may be upon his name, or estate, I may say of it as *Athanasius* of his banishment, it is *nubecula citò transitura*, a little cloud which will soon be blown over ; and then his gulf is hot, his hell is past.

*Albus ut obscuro detergit nubila cælo
sepe Notus, neque parturit imbres
Perpetuos; sic tu sapiens finire memento
Tristitiam, Hor. Ode 7.1.*

Death begins a wicked mans hell, but
it puts an end to a godly mans hell.
Think

Think with thy self, what if I endure this? it is but a *temporary hell*; indeed if all our hell be here, it is but an easie hell. What is the cup of affliction to the cup of Damnation? *Lazarus* could not get a crum; he was so diseased, that the dogs took pity on him, and (as if they had been his Physicians) *licked his sores*; but this was an easie hell, the *Angels* quickly fetch'd him out of it. If all our hell be in this life, in the midst of this hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more *Hell*, but *Paradise*. If our hell be here, we may see to the *bottom* of it, it is but skin-deep, it cannot touch the soul, and we may see to the *end* of it: 'tis an hell that is short-lived *. After a wet night of affliction comes a bright morning of the Resurrection; if our lives be short, our tryals cannot be long. As our *riches* take *wings* and flye, so do our *sufferings*; then let us be contented.

* *Noſte
pluit tota,
redierunt
ſpectacula
mane.*

S E C T. XIII.

The thirteenth Argument to Contentment.

The last Argument to Contentment is this: To have a competency, and to want *Contentment*, is a great judgment. For a man to have a huge stomach*, that whatever meat ^{* Caninum appetitum.} you give him, he is still craving, and never satisfied; you do say, this is a great judgment upon the man: Thou who art *beluo pecuniæ*, a devourer of money, and yet never hast enough, but still cryest, *Give, give*, this is a sad judgment; *They shall eat and not have enough**. The throat ^{* Hol. 4. 10.} of a malicious man is an open sepulchre*, so is the heart of a covetous man. ^{* Rom. 3. 23.} Covetousness is not only *malum culpæ*, but *malum pænæ*; it is not only a sin, but the

the *punishment* of a sin. 'Tis a secret curse upon a covetous person, he shall thirst and thirst, and never be satisfied, *He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver**; and is not this a curse? what was it but a severe judgment upon the people of Judah? *Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink**, Oh let us take heed of this plague. Did Esau say to his brother, I have *abundance**, my brother, or as we translate it, *have enough*? and shall not a Christian say so much more? 'Tis sad that our heart should be so dead to heavenly things, and as a sponge to suck in earthly. Let all that hath been said, work our minds to holy Contentation.

* Eccl. 5.
10.

* Hag. 1.6.

* Gen. 33.

6.

CHAP. XII.

*Three things inserted by way of
Caution.*

IN the next place I come to lay *Caution 1.*
down some necessary Cautions :
Although (I say) a man should be con-
tented in every estate ; yet there are
three estates in which he must not be
contented.

I. He must not be contented in a
natural estate ; here he must learn not
to be content. A sinner in his pure
naturals is under the *wrath of God* *, * *John 3.*
and shall he be content, when that *16.*
dreadful Vial is going to be poured
out ? is it nothing to be under the
scorchings of divine fury ? *Who can
dwell with everlasting burnings ?* A
sinner, as a sinner, is *under the power
of Satan* *, and shall he in this *estate* be * *Acts 26.*
contented ? who would be contented *18.*

to

to stay in the Enemies quarters? while we sleep in the lap of sin, the Devil doth to us as the *Philistines* did to *sampson*, cut the lock of our strength and put out our eyes*; be not content, O sinner, in this estate. For a man to be in debt body and soul, in fear every hour to be arrested and carried prisoner to hell, shall he now be content? Here I preach against contentation. Oh get out of this condition; I would hasten you out of it, as the Angel hastened *Lot* out of *sodom**; there is the smell of the fire and brimstone upon you. The longer a man stays in his sin, the more sin doth strengthen*; 'tis hard to get out of sin when the heart as a garri-son is victualled and fortified. A young plant is easily removed; but when the tree is once rooted, there is no stirring of it: thou who

* 2 Cor.
4. 4.

* Gen. 19.
15.

* Heb. 3. 13.

*Vincere consuetudinem est
dura pugna* Aug.

* Τα μὴ καθαροῦ τῷ σωμα-
των ὁκόσον ἀν. θρέψης,
μᾶλλον βλάψεις. Hip-
pocr. l. 2. Aphor. 9.

who art rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will cost thee many a sad pull ere thou art plucked out of thy *natural estate**. 'Tis an *Jer. 6. 16. hard thing to have a brazen face and a broken heart. *He travelleth with iniquity**, Psal. 7. 14. Be assured the *Psal. 7. longer you travel with your sins, ^{14.} the more and the sharper pangs you must expect in the *new birth*. Oh be not contented with your natural estate. *David* saith, *Why art thou disquieted O my soul* *? but a sinner *Ps. 43. 5. should say to himself, *Why art thou not disquieted, O my soul?* why is it that thou layest afflictions so to heart, and canst not lay sin to heart? 'Tis a mercy when we are disquieted about sin; a man had better be at the trouble of setting a bone, than to be lame, and in pain all his life; blessed is that trouble that brings the soul to Christ. 'Tis one of the worst sights to see a bad conscience quiet; of the two, better is a fever, than a

lethargy. I wonder to see a man in his natural estate content ; what? contented to go to hell?

Caution 2.

2. Though in regard of externals a man should be in every state content, yet he must not be content in such a condition wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a mans trade be such that he can hardly use it but he must trespass upon a Command (and so *makes a trade of sin*) he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case had better knock off and divert; better lose some of his gain, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So for servants that live in a *profane Family* (the suburbs of hell) where the Name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain; they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come *out of the Tents of these sinners*; there is a double danger in living among the profane.

1. Lest

1. Lest we come to be infected with the poison of their ill example. Joseph living in Pharaohs Court, had learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh*. We are prone to suck in example*, men take in deeper impressions by the eye, than by the ear. ^{Gen. 42.} Dives was a bad pattern, and he had many brethren that seeing him ^{15. Vivitur exemplis magis quam legibus.} sin, trode just in his steps; therefore, saith he, I pray thee send him to my Fathers house; for I have five brethren, that he may testifie to them, that they come not into this place of ^{Luke 16. 27, 28.} torment. Dives knew which way they went; it is easie to catch a disease from another, but not to catch health. The bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad; take an equal quantity and proportion, so much sweet wine, with so much sower vinegar; the vinegar will sooner sowre the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar. Sin is compared to the

* 1 Kings 8 38. *plague**, and to *leaven**, to shew
 * 1 Cor. 5. 7. of what a spreading nature it is. A
 bad master makes a bad servant. *Jacobs* cattel by looking on the rods which were speckled and ring-strak'd, conceived like the rods: We do as we see others before us, especially *above* us. If the head be sick, the other parts of the body are distempered. If the Sun shine not upon the mountains, it must needs set in the valleys. We pray, *Lead us not into temptation*; and do we lead our selves into temptation? *Lot* was the worlds miracle, who kept himself fresh in *Sodom's* salt water.

2. By living in an evil Family, we are liable to incur their punishment; *Pour out thy wrath upon the Families that call not upon thy Name**. * Jer. 13. 25. For want of pouring out prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be poured out. 'Tis dangerous living in the *Tents of Kedar*. When God sends his *flying roll*, written within
 and

and without with curses, it enters in-
to the house of the thief and perjurer,
and it consumes the timber and the
*stones thereof**. Is it not of sad con- * Zac. 5. 4.
sequence to live in a profane per-
jur'd Family, when the sin of the
Governour pulls his house about his
ears? If the stone and timber be
destroyed, how shall the servant
escape? And suppose God send not
a *temporal roll* of curses in the Fami-
ly, there is a *spiritual roll*, and that is
worse*. Be not content to live *Pro 3. 33
where Religion dies. *Salute the bre-*
thren, and Nymphas, and the Church
*which is in his house**: the house of *Col. 4. 15.
the godly is a *little Church*; the house
of the wicked a *little hell**. Oh incor- *Pro. 7. 25
porate your selves into a religious
Family; the house of a good man is
perfum'd with a blessing*. When *Pro. 3. 33
the holy oyl of grace is poured on
the head, the *savour* of this ointment
sweetly diffuseth it self, and the *ver-*
tue of it runs down upon the skirts

of the family. Pious examples are very magnetical and forcible. *Seneca* said to his Sister, though I leave you not wealth, yet I will leave you a good example. Let us ingraff our selves among the Saints; by being often among the spices, we come to smell of them.

3. *Caution.* 3. The third Caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content our selves with a *little grace*. Grace is the *best blessing*. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of Christs Ascension to heaven, *to give gifts*; and the end of those gifts, *that we may grow up into him who is the head*

**Ephes. 4. Christ* *. Where the Apostle distinguisheth between our *being* in Christ, and our *growing* in him: our ingraffing and our flourishing: be not content with a *modicum* in Religion.

'Tis not enough that there be *life*,
but

but there must be *fruit*. Barrenness in the Law was accounted a curse. The further we are from fruit, the nearer we are to cursing*. 'Tis a sad * Heb. 6. thing when men are fruitful only ^{8.} *in the unfruitful works of darkness*. Be not content with a dram or two of grace; next to a *Still-born*, a *starveling* in Christ is worst. Oh covet more grace, never think thou hast enough; it is *bona & honesta avaritia*; we are bid to covet *the best things* *; it is an heavenly * 1 Cor. ambition, when we desire to be ^{12.} high in Gods favour; a blessed contentment, when all the strife is, who shall be the most holy. Saint Paul, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not with a little grace; he *reached forward*, and *pressed towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* *. A true * Phil. 3. Christian is a wonder, he is the most ^{14.} contented, and yet the least satisfied: he is contented with a morsel of
P 4 bread,

bread, and a little water in the Cruse, yet never satisfied with grace; he doth *anbelare*, pant and breathe after more; this is his prayer, Lord, more conformity to Christ, more communion with Christ; he would fain have Christs Image more lively pictured upon his soul. True grace is always progressive: as the Saints are called *Lamps* and *Stars* in regard of their *light*; so 2 Il. 61. 3. *trees of righteousness* * for their growth; they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth several sorts of fruit.

A true Christian grows, 1. *Formâ, in beauty*. Grace is the best complexion of the soul; it is at the first plantation like *Rachel*, fair to look upon; but still the more it lives, the more it sends forth its rays of beauty. *Abrahams* faith was at first beautiful; but at last it did shine in its orient colours, and grew so illustrious, that God himself was in love with

with it, and makes his faith a pattern to all believers.

2. A true Christian grows *Suavitate*, in sweetness. A poisonous weed may grow as much as the Hyssop, or Rosemary; the Poppy in the field, as the Corn; the Crab, as the Pearmain; but the one hath a harsh sour taste, the other mellows as it grows: An hypocrite may grow in outward dimensions, as much as a child of God, he may pray as much, profess as much; but he grows only in magnitude, he brings forth sour grapes, his duties are leavened with pride; the other ripens as he grows; he grows in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweeten his duties, and make them come off with a better relish. The believer grows as the flower, he casts a fragrancy and perfume.

3. A true Christian grows *Robore*, in strength; he grows still more rooted and settled. The more the tree grows,

* *ἵππιζω*-
μῆσι.
 Col. 2. 7.

grows, the more it spreads its root in the earth*; A Christian who is a plant of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Christ, and sucks spiritual juice and sap from him; he is a dwarf in regard of humility, but a gyant in regard of strength. He is strong to do duties, to bear burdens, to resist tentations.

4. He grows *Vigore*, in the exercise of his grace; He hath not only oyl in his Lamps, but his Lamps are burning and shining. Grace is agile and dexterous. Christs Vines do flourish*, hence we read of a *lively hope**, and a *servent love**; here is the activity of grace. Indeed sometimes grace is as a sleepy habit in the soul, like sap in the Vine, not exerting its vigour; which may be occasion'd through spiritual sloth, or by reason of falling into some sin; but this is only *pro tempore*, for a while; the *spring* of grace will come, the *flowers* will appear;

* Can. 6.
 11.
 * 1 Pet.
 1. 3.
 * 1 Pet.
 1. 22.

ear; and the Fig-tree put forth her
green figs. The fresh gales of the
Spirit do sweetly revive and refocil-
late grace. The Church of Christ,
whose heart was a Garden, and her
graces as pretious Spices, prays for
the heavenly breathings of the Spi-
rit, that her sacred spices might flow
out *.

* Cant. 4.
16.

5. A true Christian grows In-
cremento, both in the kind and in
the degree of grace. To his spiritu-
al living he gets an augmentation:
he adds to faith, virtue; to virtue,
knowledge; to knowledge, tempe-
rance, &c. * here is grace growing in
the kind; and he goes on from faith to
faith*; there is grace growing in the
degree. We are bound to give thanks to
God for you brethren, because your faith
groweth exceedingly; * ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~encreaseth~~ ^{encreaseth}, over and above. And
the Apostle speaks of those spiritual
plants which were laden with Gospel
fruit *, Phil. 1. 11. A Christian is
com-

* 2 Pet. 1.

5, 6.

* Rom. 1.

17.

* 1 Thel.

11.

* Phil. 1.

11.

compar'd to the *Vine* (an embleme of fruitfulness) he must bear full clusters; we are bid to *perfect* that

* *Thef. 3.* which is *lacking in our faith* *. A Christian must never be so old as to

10.

* *Pf. 92. 14.* *fruit in his old age* *. An heaven-born

plant is ever growing; he never thinks he grows enough; he is not content unless he add every day one cubit to his spiritual stature. We must not be content just with so much grace as will keep life and soul together; a dram or two must not suffice, but we must be still encreasing

* *Col. 2. 9.* *with the encrease of God* *. We had need *renew* our strength as the

* *Il. 40. 31* *Eagle* *; our sins are renewed, our wants are renewed, our tentations are renewed, & shall not our *strength* be renewed? Oh be not content with the first *embrio* of grace, grace in its infancy, and minority. You look for degrees of glory; be you Christians of Degrees.

Though

Though a Believer should be contented with a *modicum* in his estate, yet not with a *modicum* in Religion. A Christian of the right breed labours still to excel himself, and come near unto that holiness in God, who is the original, the pattern and prototype of all holiness.

CHAP. XIII.

Use 4.

Shewing how a Christian may know whether he hath learned this divine Art.

Use 4. **T**HUS having laid down *Use 4.* these three Cautions, *I Trial.* proceed in the next place to an Use of Trial. 4. How may a Christian know that he hath learned this lesson of Contentment? I shall lay down some *verities* or characters by which you shall know it.

I. A

1. Charact.

I. A contented spirit is a *silent spirit*. He hath not one word to say against God; I was *dumb* or *silent* because *thou, Lord, didst it**, Ps. 39.

* Ps. 39.

Contentment silenceth all disputes.

* Lam. 3.

He sitteth alone and keepeth silence.*

28.

There is a sinful silence, when God is dishonoured, his truth wounded and men hold their peace; this silence is a loud sin; and there is an *holy* silence, when the soul sits down quiet and content with its condition: When *Samuel* tells *Eli* that heavy message from God, that he would *judge his house, and that the iniquity of his Family should not be purged away with sacrifice for ever* *; doth *Eli* murmur or dispute? No, he hath not one word to say against God; *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good* *. A discontented spirit saith as *Pharaoh*, *Who is the Lord?* why should I suffer all this? why should I be brought into this low condition? *Who is the Lord?* But a gracious heart

* 1 Sam.

3. 13.

saith

* Ver. 18.

saith

saith as *Eli*, it is the Lord, let him do what he will with me. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, had offered up *strange fire*, and fire went from the Lord and devoured them *, * Lev. 10. 1. as *Aaron* now in a passion of discontent? No, *Aaron* held his peace *. A * Verse 3. contented spirit is never angry, un- less with himself for having hard thoughts of God. When *Jonah* said I do well to be angry; this was not a contented spirit, it did not become a Prophet.

2. A contented spirit is a chear- 2. Charact. ful spirit, the Greeks call it *Εὐθυμία*. Contentment is something more than *Patience*; for *Patience* denotes only submission *, Contentment * signifies denotes *cheerfulness*. A contented Christian is more than passive; he doth not only bear the Cross, re. Cypr. item, persevere. but take up the Cross *. He looks upon God as a wise God; and whatever he doth, though it be not ad voluntatem, yet ad sanitatem *, it is 24. * Ang.

is in order to a cure: Hence the contented Christian is cheerful, and with the Apostle, *takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses, &c.** He doth not only submit to Gods dealings, but rejoice in them; he doth not only say, *Just is the Lord* in all that is befallen me; but *Good is the Lord*. This is to be contented. A sullen Melancholy is hateful; it is said, God loves a *cheerful Giver**; I, and God loves a *cheerful Liver*. We are bid in Scripture not to be *careful*, but we are now here bid not to be *cheerful*. He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy; and indeed he hath that within him, which is the ground of cheerfulness; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart*.

* 2 Cor.
12. 10.

* 2 Cor.
9. 7.

* Mat. 9. 2.

3. Charact.

Εὐχαριστία

5075.

* Job. 1. 21

* 1 Thes.

3. A contented spirit, is a *thankful spirit**. This is a degree above the other; *In every thing giving thanks**. A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore

hath

hath his heart scrued up to thankfulness; others will bless God for prosperity, he bleſseth him for affliction. Thus he reasons with himself, Am I in want? God sees it better for me to want, than to abound; God is now dieting of me, he sees it better for my spiritual health, sometimes to be kept fasting; therefore he doth not only submit, but is thankful. The male-content is ever complaining of his condition; the contented spirit is ever giving thanks. Oh what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a *Temple*, where the praises of God are sung forth, not a *sepulchre*, where in they are buried. A contented Christian in the greatest straits hath his heart enlarged, & dilated in thankfulness. He oft contemplates Gods love in election; he sees that he is a *monument* of mercy, therefore desires to be a *pattern* of praise. There is always gratulatory musick in a contented soul; the spirit of grace works in

Q the heart

heart like new wine, which under the heaviest pressures of sorrow, will have a vent open for thankfulness; this is to be content.

4. He that is content, no condition comes amiss to him; so it is in the

Text, in quocunque statu, in whatever state I am *. A contented

Christian can, *prout res exigit*, turn himself to

any thing, either want, or abound.

The people of *Israel* knew neither how to abound, nor yet

how to want *; when

they were in want,

they murmured, *Can*

God prepare a Table in

the wilderness? & when

they are and were fil-

led, then they lifted up

the heel. *Paul* knew how to ma-

nage every estate? he could be

either a note higher, or lower, he

was (in this sense) an *Universalist*, he

could

* Καὶ ὀλίγοις κεχεῖναι οἶ-
δα, καὶ λίμον φέρειν καὶ ἐν
δείαν, καὶ περισσεύειν.
Chrysost.

* Οἱ Ἰσραηλῖται ἔτε πει-
νᾶν ἔδυσαν, κατελάλησαν
τῷ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ εἶπον, Μὴ
δυνήσεται ὁ Θεὸς ἐτοιμά-
σαι τραπέζαν, ἀλλ' ἔτε
χορτάζειν φαγον τῷ καὶ
ανεπλήθυσαν, καὶ ἀπελάλ-
τισαν. Theophylact.

could do any thing that

God would have him*:

If he were in prosperi-

ty, he knew how to be

thankful; if in adversi-

ty, he knew how to be

patient; he

was neither lift up with the one, nor

cast down with the other. He

could carry a greater

sail, or lesser* ; Thus

a contented Christian

knows how to turn

himself to any condi-

tion. *Sicut bonus est*

dux & peritus, qui in

quolibet exercitu opera-

tur secundum exigen-

tiam ejus; & coriarius

qui ex quolibet corio facit optimos so-

lulares; Ita Christianus sapiens,

qui scit quolibet statu bene se ge-

re. We have those who can be

contented in some estate; but not

in every estate: They can be

content in a wealthy estate, when

* *Similis est vita rota, in
cujus modo infima, modo su-
prema parte versamur. A-
quinas.*

* *Magna & rara virtus
est inter epulas esurire, in-
ter vestes algere, inter
honores humiliari. Scivit
Hannibal penuriam pati,
nescivit abundare; nam
delicia Capuana Hanni-
balem invictum enervav-
runt, & Romanis jam
imbellem vincendum obje-
cerunt. Ber.*

Aquinas.

they have the streams of milk and honey; while Gods candle shines upon their head, now they are content; but if the wind turn and be against them, now they are discontented. While they have a silver crutch to lean upon, they are contented; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are discontented; but *Paul* had

* Ἰσθ' ἢν ἐν τῇ ἐν-
δεία, ἐν τῇ πλησμονῇ,
ἔτε ἐκείθεν πιεζόμενῳ,
ἔτε ἐντεῦθεν χαυνόμε-
νῳ. Chrysost.

learned in every state to carry himself with equanimity of mind; so others could be content with their affliction, so

God would give them leave to pick and chuse. They could be content to bear *such* a cross; they could better endure sickness than poverty, or bear loss of estate than loss of children; if they might have such a mans cross, they could be content; any condition but the present: this is not to be content. A contented Christian doth not go to chuse his Cross, but leaves

leaves God to chuse for him ; he is content both for the *kind*, and for the *duration*. A contented spirit saith ; Let God apply what medicine he pleaseth, and let it lye on as long as it will ; I know when it hath done its cure, and eaten the venom of sin out of my heart, God will take it off again. In a word, a contented Christian, being sweetly captivated under the authority of the Word, desires to be wholly at Gods dispose, and is willing to live in that sphere and climate where God has set him ; and if at any time there hath been an instrument of doing noble and brave service in the publick, he knows he is but a *rational tool*, a servant to authority, and is content to return to his former private condition of life. *Cincinnatus*, after he had done worthily, and purchased to himself great fame in his Dictatorship, did notwithstanding afterwards voluntarily return to till and manure

P. Mart. his four acres of Ground. Thus should it be with Christians, professing *Godliness with Contentment*; having served *Mars*, not daring to offend *Jupiter*; lest otherwise they discover only to the world a *brutish valour*, being so untam'd and headstrong, that when they have conquered others, yet they are not able to rule their own spirits.

s. Charact. 5. He that is contented with his condition, to rid himself out of trouble, will not run himself into sin. I deny not but a Christian may lawfully seek to change his condition; so far as Gods providence doth go before, he may follow; but when men will not follow providence, but run before it, as he said, *This evil is of the Lord, why should*

2King.6.* *I wait any longer? if God doth not open the door by his providence, they will break it open, and winde themselves out of affliction by sin, bringing their souls into trouble by
bringing

bringing their estates out of trouble: This is far from holy Contentation, this is unbelief broken out into rebellion. A contented Christian is willing to wait Gods leisure, and will not stir till God open a door. As *Paul* said in another case, *They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out* *: So with reverence saith the contented Christian, *God hath cast me into this condition; and though it be sad and troublesome, yet I will not stir till God by a clear Providence fetch me out. Thus those brave spirited Christians, Heb. 11. 35. They accepted not deliverance* *, that is, upon base dishonourable terms. They would rather stay in prison, than purchase their liberty by carnal compliance. *Estius* observes on the place, they might not only have

Q 4

had

* Acts 16.

37.

* Heb. 11.

had their enlargement, but been raised to honour, and put into offices of trust; yet the honour of Religion was dearer to them, than either liberty or honour. A contented Christian will not remove, till as the *Israelites* ~~h~~see a pillar of cloud and fire going before him: *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord**. 'Tis good to stay Gods leisure, and not to extricate our selves out of trouble, till we see the star of Gods providence pointing out a way to us.

* Lam. 3.
26.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Use 5.

*Containing a Christian Directory, or
Rules about Contentment.*

Use 5. **I** Proceed now to an use of ^{Use 5.} direction, to shew Chri-^{Direction}stians how they may attain to this *Divine Art* of Contentation. Certainly it is feasible, others of Gods Saints have reached to it. St. Paul here had it; and what do we think of those we read of in the little book of Martyrs, Heb. II. who had tryals of *cruel mockings and scorchings*, who wandred about in *Desarts* and *Caves*,

Caves, yet were contented; so that it is possible to be had. And here I shall lay down some Rules for holy Contentment.

S E C T. I.

I. Rule. *Advance Faith.*

All our disquiets do issue immediately from unbelief, 'Tis this that raiseth the storm of discontent in the heart. Oh set Faith a work; 'tis the property of Faith to silence our doubtings, to scatter our Fears, to still the heart when the passions are up. Faith works the heart to a sweet serene composure; 'tis not having *food* and *raiment*, but having *Faith*, which will make us content. Faith chides down passion; When Reason begins to sink, let Faith swim.

Quest.

Quest. How doth Faith work Contentment?

Ans.

Answ. 1. Faith shews the soul, *Answ.*

that whatever its tryals are, yet it is from the hand of a Father; 'tis indeed a bitter cup, but *shall I not drink the Cup which my Father hath given me to drink?* 'tis love to my soul; God *corrects* with the same love he *crowns* me; God is now training me up for heaven, he carves me, to make me a *polished shaft*. These sufferings bring forth patience, humility, even the *peaceable* * Heb. 12: in *fruits of righteousness* *. And if God 11. 'tis can bring such sweet fruit out of a sour stock, let him graft me where he please. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment.

2. Faith sucks the honey of Contentment out of the hive of the Promise. Christ is the *Vine*, the Promises are the clusters of Grapes that grow upon this Vine; and Faith presseth the sweet wine of Contentment out of these spiritual clusters of the Promises. I will shew you but

but one cluster; *The Lord will give*
 [PL. 84.] *grace and glory* *: here is enough for
 faith to live upon. The promise is
 the flower out of which Faith destils
 the spirits, and quintessence of divine
 Contentment. In a word, Faith car-
 ries up the soul, and makes it aspire
 after more noble and generous de-
 lights than earth affords, and to live
 in the world *above* the world *: would you lead contented lives?
 live up to the height of your Faith.

* *Discite*
in hoc
mundo su-
pra mun-
dum esse.
 Ambr.

SECT. II.

2. Rule. *Labour for Assurance.*

Oh let us get the interest clear'd
 between God and our own
 souls. *Interest* is a word much
 in use; a pleasing word; Inter-
 est in great friends, interest-mo-
 ney; Oh if there be an *inter-*
est worth looking after, 'tis an in-
 terest

terest between God and the soul;
Labour to say, *My God*. To be with-
out money and without friends, and
without God too*, is sad; but he* Eph.2:
whose faith doth flourish into afflu-^{12.}
rance, that can say, *I know in whom I*
*have believed**, (as Saint Paul,) that* 2 Tim:
man hath enough to give his heart^{1.12.}
contentment. When a mans debts
are paid, and he can go abroad with-
out fear of arresting, what content-
ment is this! Oh, let your title be
cleared; if God be ours, whatever
we want in the creature, is infinitely
made up in him. Do I want bread?
I have Christ the bread of life. Am
I under defilement? his blood is
like the trees of the sanctuary; not
only for meat, but medicine*. If* Ezek:
any thing in the world be worth^{47.12.}
labouring for; it is to get sound e-
vidences that God is ours. If this
be once cleared, what can come a-
miss? No matter what storms I
meet with, so that I know where
to

to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God, is so well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing else. To rest in a condition where a Christian cannot say God is his God, is matter of *fear*; and if he can say so truly, and yet is not contented, is matter of *shame*. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God; it was sad with him, *1 Sam. 30.* Ziklag burnt, his wives taken captive, he lost all, and like to have lost his souldiers hearts too (for they *spake of stoning him*;) yet he had the ground of Contentment within him, *viz. an interest in God*, and this was a pillar of supportment to his spirit. He that knows *God is his*, and all that is in God is *for his good*; if this doth not satisfie, I know nothing will.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

3. Rule. *Get an humble spirit.*

The humble man is the content-ed man; if his estate be low, his heart is lower than his estate; therefore be content. If his esteem in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himself, than others can have of him. The humble man studies his own unworthiness; he looks upon himself as *less than the least* of Gods mercies*, * Gen. 32. and then a *little* will content him: He^{10.} cries out with *Paul*, that he is *the chief of sinners**; therefore doth not* 1 Tim. murmur, but admire: He doth^{1.15.} not say his comforts are small, but his sins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore is contented.

tented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himself; he knows the worst piece God cuts him, is better than he deserves. A proud man is never contented, he is one that hath an high opinion of himself; therefore under small blessings is disdainful, under small crosses impatient. The humble spirit is the contented spirit; if his cross be light, he reckons it, in the Inventory of his mercies; if it be heavy, yet takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his estate is worser, it is to make him better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, Contentment will be the superstructure.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

4. Rule. *Keep a clear conscience.* 1 Tim. 3. 9.

Contentment is the *Manna* that is laid up in the *Ark* of good conscience: Oh take heed of indulging any sin. 'Tis as natural for guilt to breed disquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermine. Sin lies as *Jonah* in the Ship, it raiseth a tempest. If dust or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cause a soreness in it: if the eye be clear; then it is free from that soreness: If sin be gotten into the conscience, which is as the eye of the soul, then grief and disquiet breeds there: but keep the eye of conscience clear, and all is well. What *Solomon* saith of a good stomach, I may say of a good conscience: * *To the hungry soul* * Pro. 27. 9
every bitter thing is sweet; so to a
R good

good conscience every bitter thing is sweet; it can pick Contentment out of the *Cross*. Good conscience turns the waters of *Marah* into Wine. Would you have a quiet heart? get a smiling conscience. I wonder not to hear *Paul* say, he was in every state content; When he could make that triumph; *I have liv-*

* *Acts* 13.4 *ed in all good conscience unto this day*.*

When once a mans reckonings are clear; it must needs let in abundance of contentment into the heart. Good conscience can suck contentment out of the bitterest drug; under slanders, *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of our conscience**; in case of imprisonment, *Paul* had his prison-songs, and could play the sweet lesson of Contentment, when his feet

* 2 Cor.
1.12.

* *Acts* 16.
25.
Augustine.

were in the stocks*; one calls it *bona conscientiae Paradisus*, the Paradise of a good conscience; and if it be so, then in prison we may be in Paradise.

When the times are troublesome,
good

ing good conscience makes a calm; If
ent conscience be clear, what though the
nce days be cloudy? Is it not a content-
nto ment, to have a friend always by to
niet speak a good word for us? such a
. I friend is conscience. Good consci-
was ence as *Dauids Harp*, drives away
he the evil spirit of discontent. When
iv- thoughts begin to arise, and the heart
y* is disquieted, Conscience saith to a
are man as the *King* did to *Nehemiah*,
nce *Why is thy countenance sad**? So ^{*Neh.2.2.}
art. saith conscience, hast not thou the
nt- seed of *God in thee*? art not thou an
un- heir of the promise? Hast not thou
the a treasure that thou canst never be
of plundered of? Why is thy counte-
on- nance sad? Oh keep conscience
ef- clear; and you shall never want con-
ent- tentment. For a man to keep the
ne pipes of his body, the veins and ar-
of- teries free from colds and obstructi-
en- ons, is the best way to maintain
se. health: So, to keep conscience
e, clear, and to preserve it from the ob-

obstructions of guilt, is the best way to maintain contentment. First, conscience is pure, and then peaceable.

S E C T. V.

5. Rule. *Learn to deny your selves.*

Look well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things.

- { 1. Mortifie your desires.
- { 2. Moderate your delights.

1. *Mortifie your desires.* We must not be of the Dragons temper, who (they say) is so thirsty, that no water will quench his thirst; *Mortifie therefore your inordinate affection**; in the Greek it is *ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν*, your evil affection; to shew that our desires when they are inordinate, are evil. Crucifie your desires,

*Col. 3. 5.

fires, ~~vexed~~, be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite.

Quest. How should a Christian *Quest.* martyr his desires?

Answ. 1. Get a right judgment *Answ.* of the things here below: They are mean, beggarly things; *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* *Pro. 23 5 The appetite must be guided by reason; the affections are the feet of the soul, therefore they must *follow* the judgment, not *lead* it.

2. Often seriously meditate of mortality; Death will soon crop those flowers which we delight in; and pull down the fabrick of those bodies which we so garnish and beautifie. Think when you are locking up your money in your chest, who shall shortly lock you up in your coffin.

2. *Moderate your delights.* Set not your hearts too much upon any creature*. What we over- *Ps. 62. 20 love, we shall over-grieve; *Rachel*

set her heart too much upon her children, and when she had lost them, she lost her self too: such a vein of grief was opened, as could not be stench'd, *she refused to be comforted.* Here was discontent. When we let any creature lie too near our heart, when God pulls away that comfort, a piece of our heart is rent away with it. Too much fondness ends in frowardness. Those that would be content in the want of mercy, must be moderate in the enjoyment. *Jonathan* dipt the rod in hony, he did not trust in it. Let us take heed of ingulphing our selves in pleasure; better have a spare diet, than by having too much, to surfeit.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

6. Rule. *Get much of heaven into your heart.*

Spiritual things satisfy; the more of heaven is in us, the less earth will content. He that hath once tasted the love of God, his thirst is much quenched towards sublunary things; the joys of Gods Spirit are heart-filling and heart-cheering joys; he that hath these, hath heaven begun in him, *Rom. 14. 17.* and shall we not be content to be in heaven? Oh get a sublime heart, *Seek the things that are above* *; flie aloft in your affections, thirst after the graces and comforts of the Spirit: the Eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the stinging of the Serpent; the Serpent creeps on his belly, and stings only such creatures as go upon the earth.

R 4

Dis

Discontent is a serpent that stings only an earthly heart ; an heavenly soul that with the Eagle flies aloft, finds abundantly enough in God to give contentment, and is not stung with the cares and disquiets of the world.

SECT. VII.

7. Rule. *Look not so much on the dark side of your condition, as on the light.*

God doth chequer his providences, white and black, as the pillar of cloud had its light side and dark ; look on the light side of thy estate ; who looks on the backside of a landskip ? Suppose thou art cast in a Law-suit, there is the *dark side* ; yet thou hast some land left, there is the *light side*. Thou hast sickness in thy body, there is the *dark side* ; but grace in thy soul,

soul, there is the *light side*. Thou
hast a child taken away, there is the
dark side; thy husband lives, there
is the *light side*. Gods Providences
in this life are various, represented
by those speckled horses among the
Myrtle-trees, which were * the *red* *Zach. i. 8
and *white*; mercies and afflictions
are inter-woven; God doth speckle
his work. Oh, saith one, I want such
a comfort; but weigh all thy mer-
cies in the ballance, and that will
make thee content. If a man did
want a finger, would he be so discon-
tented for the loss of that, as not to
be thankful for all the other parts
and joints of the body? Look on the
light side of your condition, and
then all your discontents will easily
disband; do not pore upon your
losses, but ponder upon your mer-
cies. What! wouldst thou have no
cross at all? Why should one man
think to have all good things, when
himself is good but in part? wouldst
thou

thou have no evil about thee, who hast so much evil in the? thou art not fully sanctified in this life, how then thinkest thou to be fully satisfied? never look for perfection of contentment till there be perfection of grace.

S E C T. VIII.

8. Rule. *Consider in what a posture we stand here in the world.*

I. We are in a *military* condition
 2. Tim. 2.3. we are souldiers *; now a souldier is content with any thing: what though he hath not his stately house, his rich furniture, his soft bed, his full table, yet doth not complain; he can lie in straw as well as downe; he minds not his lodging, but his thoughts run upon dividing the spoil, and the garland of honour that shall be set upon

upon his head; and for hope of this, is content to run any hazard, endure any hardship. Were it not absurd to hear him complain that he wants such provision, and is fain to lie out in the fields? a Christian is a *military person*, he fights the Lords battels, he is Christs Ensign-bearer. Now what though he endures hard fare, and the bullets flie about? he fights for a Crown, and therefore must be content.

2. We are in a *peregrine condition*; Pilgrims and Travellers: A man that is in a strange Country is contented with any diet or usage, he is glad of any thing, though he hath not that respect or attendance as he looks for at home; nor is capable of the priviledges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows when he comes into his own Country he hath lands to inherit, and there he shall have honour and respect: So it is with a child of God, he is in a pilgrim-

pilgrim-condition, *I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were* *. Therefore let a Christian be content: he is in the world, but not of the world; he is born of God, and is a Citizen of the new *Jerusalem* *, therefore, though he *hunger and thirst, and have no certain dwelling place* *, yet he must be content; it will be better when he comes into his own Country.

* Ps. 39. 12

* Heb. 12. 10.

* 1 Cor. 4. 11.

3. We are in a *mendicant condition*; we are beggars, we beg at heaven gate, *Give us this day our daily bread*; we live upon Gods alms, therefore must be content with any thing; a beggar must not pick and chuse, he is contented with the refuse. Oh, why dost thou murmur that art a beggar, and art fed out of the alms-basket of Gods Providence?

SECT.

SECT. IX.

9. Rule. *Let not your hopes depend extrinsicè upon these outward things.*

Lean not upon sandy pillars; we oft build our comforts upon such a friend, or estate, and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our hearts begin either to *fail* or *fret*. A lame man leans on his crutches, and if they *break* he is undone; let not thy contentment go upon crutches which may soon fail; the ground of contentment must be within thy self. The word *αὐτάρκεια*, which is used for contentment, signifies self-sufficiency; a Christian hath that from within that is able to support him, that strength of faith and *good hope through grace*, as bears up his heart in the deficiency of outward

ward comforts. The Philosophers of old, when their estates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the mind, their learning and virtue; and shall not a believer much more in the grace of the Spirit, that rich enamel and embroidery of the soul? Say with thy self, If friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within comforts me, viz. an heavenly treasure, *Omnia mea mecum porto*; when the blossoms of my estate are blown off, still there is the sap of contentment in the root my heart; I have still an interest in God, and that interest cannot be broken off. Oh never place your felicity in these dull and beggarly things here below.

SECT.

SECT. X.

10. Rule. *Let us often compare our condition.*

Quest. *How should I compare ?*

Ans^w. Make this five-fold comparison.

1. Let us compare our condition ^{I. Comparison.} and our desert together ; if we have not what we desire, we have more than we deserve. For our *mercies*, we have deserved *less*, for our afflictions, we have deserved *more*.

First, in regard of our *mercies*, we have deserved less. What can we deserve ? *Can man be profitable to the Almighty ?* we live upon free grace. Alexander gave a great gift to one of his subjects ; the man being much taken with it, This (saith he) is more than I am worthy of ; I do not give thee this, saith the King, because thou art

art worthy of it, but I give a gift like *Alexander*. Whatever we have is not *merit*, but *bounty*; the least bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the garland of our salvation; he that hath the least mercy will die in Gods debt.

Secondly, in regard of our *afflictions*, we have deserved more. *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities*

* *Ezra 9.* *deserve* *. Is our condition sad?

13:

we have deserved it should be worse: hath God taken away our estate from us? he might have taken away Christ from us: hath he thrown us into Prison? he might have thrown us into hell; he might as well damn us, as whip us; this should make us contented.

2. *Compara-*
rison.

* *Dum tibi*
aliena pe-
ricula me-
moras mi-
nius portes-
tua. Isid.
Soliloq. 1.

2. Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content; we look at them who are above us; let us look at them who are below us*; we see one in his

silks

silks, another in his sackcloth; one
 hath the waters of a full cup wrung
 out to him, another is mingling his
 drink with tears; how many pale
 faces do we behold, whom not sick-
 ness, but want, hath brought into a
 consumption! think of this, and be
 content. 'Tis worse with them, who
 perhaps deserve better than we, and
 are higher in Gods favour. Am I
 in prison? was not *Daniel* in a worse
 place, viz. The Lyons Den? Do I
 live in a mean cottage? Look on
 them who are banished from their
 houses. We read of the primitive
 Saints, *that they wandred up and down*
in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, of
*whom the world was not worthy**. Hast ^{* Heb. ii.}
 thou a gentle fit of an Ague? look ^{27.}
 on them who are tormented with the
 Stone and Gout, &c. others of Gods
 children have had greater afflictions,
 and have born them better than we.
Daniel fed upon pulse, and drank
 water, yet was fairer than they who
 S are

* Dan. i.
16.

are of the Kings portion* ; some Christians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulse and water, have looked better ; viz. been more patient and contented than we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoice in affliction, and do we repine ? Can they take up their Cross and walk cheerfully under it, and do we under a lighter cross murmur ?

* 2 Cor.
8.9.

3. Let us compare our condition with Christs upon Earth ; what a poor, mean condition was he pleased to be in for us ? he was contented with any thing. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor**. He could have brought down an house from heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth ; but he was contented to be in the *wine-press*, that we might be in the *wine-cellar* ; & to live poor, that we might die rich ; the manger was

was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy; he, who is now preparing mansions for us in Heaven, had none for himself on earth, *he had no where to lay his head.* Christ came in *Forma pauperis*; who being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant*. We read not of any sums of*Phil.2.7. money he had; when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it*. Jesus Christ was in a low* Mat.17. condition; he was never high, but^{27.} when he was lifted up upon the Cross, and that was his humility; he was content to live poor, and die cursed. Oh compare your condition with Christs.

4. Let us compare our condition 4. *Comparison.* with what it was once, and this will *reason.* make us content.

First, let us compare our *spiritual estate* with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood? we were heirs apparent to hel, having no right to pluck one leaf from the

Ephes. 2.
22.

tree of the promise; it was a *Christless* and *hopeless* condition; Ephes. 2. 12. but now God hath cut off the entail of hell and damnation; he hath taken you out of the wild Olive of nature, and engrafted you into Christ; making you living branches of that living Vine; he hath not only caused the light to shine *upon* you, but *into* you*, and hath interested you in all the priviledges of son-ship, is not here that may make the soul content?

* 2 Cor. 4. 6

* 1 Tim.
6. 7.

Secondly, let us compare our *temporal estate* with what it was once: alas we had nothing when we stepped out of the womb; *For we brought nothing with us into the world**; if we have not that which we desire, we have more than we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us (*but sin*) other creatures bring something with them into the world; the Lamb brings wool, the silk-worm silk, &c. but we brought nothing with us. What if our condition at present
be

be low? it is better than it was once; therefore having food and rayment, let us be content; whatever we have, Gods providence fetcht it into us; and if we lose all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This was that that made *Job* content, *Naked came I out of my Mothers womb**, as if he had said, though **Job 1.21* God hath taken away all from me, yet why should I murmur? I am as rich now as I was when I came into the world, I have as much left as I brought with me: naked came I hither: therefore blessed be the name of the Lord.

5. Let us compare our condition ^{5. Comp.} with what it shall be shortly. There ^{risen.} is a time shortly coming, when if we had all the riches of *India*, they would do us no good; we must die, and can carry nothing with us, so saith the Apostle, *It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world**; therefore it **1 Tim.* follows, *having food and rayment let* ^{5. 7.}

*Vetera
frangantur
sepulchra,
ossa divi-
tum agnos-
cas non
opes.* Bede.

us be therewith content, Verse 8. Open the rich mans grave, and see what is there ; you may find the *Misers* bones, but not his riches : were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented when we look upon our empty bags : but it is not so : God may presently seal a warrant for death to apprehend us ; and when we die we cannot carry our estate with us. Honour & riches descend not into the grave, why then are we troubled at our outward condition ? why do we disguise our selves with discontent ? Oh lay up a stock of grace, be rich in faith and good works, these *riches will follow us* * ; no other coyn but Grace will pass current in Heaven, silver and gold will not go there ; labour to *be rich towards God* ; and as for other things, be not solicitous, *we shall carry nothing with us* *.

* Rev. 14.
13.

* Luk. 12.
21.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

II. Rule. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.*

The way for a Christian to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his spirit lower: not by making his Barns wider, but his heart narrower *; one man a whole Lordship or Mannor will not content; another is satisfied with a few acres of land; what is the difference? the one studies to satisfy curiosity, the other necessity; the one thinks what he may *have*, the other thinks what he may *spare*.

* Non qui parum habet sed qui plus cupit, pauper est. Laert. Diogenes.

* Si vis esse Dives (inquit Pithecles) non est pecunia adjiciendum, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum.

* Πλῆσιος γὰρ ἔκ' ὁ

πολλῶν χρημάτων δεόμενος, καὶ πολλὰ περιβεβλημένος, ἀλλ' ὁ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχων. Chrysost.

SECT. XII.

12. Rule. *Study the vanity of the Creature.*

It matters not whether we have more or less of these things, they have vanity written upon the frontispiece of them; the world is like a *shadow that declineth*: it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiseth more than we find, and it fails us when we have most need of it*. All the world rings changes, and is constant only in its disappointments: what then if we have less of that which is at best but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of *mutation* as *motion*; and what if God cuts us short in sub-lunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to ice, which is smooth, but

* *O quantum est in rebus inane.*

but slippery; or to the Egyptian Temples, without very beautiful, and sumptuous, but within nothing to be seen but the image of an Ape; every creature saith concerning satisfaction, *It is not in me*. The world is not a filling, but a flying comfort. 'Tis like a game at Tennis: Providence bandies her golden balls, first to one, and then to another. Why are we discontented at the loss of these things, but because we expect that from them which is not, and repose that in them which we ought not; *Jonah was exceeding glad of the Gourd**, what a vanity was it? is it ** Jon. 4. 6* much to see a withering Gourd smitten? or to see the Moon dressing it self in a new shape and figure?

*Quid est
omnis hu-
jus mundi
voluptas?
annon vi-
rens he-*

dera qua textili sylva per parietem inserpit, latamque supra caput umbram explicat? paravit Deus vermem & percussit hederam & exaruit; ita prorsus hedera nostra subito marcescunt simulque cum illis omne illud umbratili gaudium.
Drexel, de Æter. P. 163.

S E C T. XIII.

13. Rule. *Get fancy regulated.*

It is the fancy which raiseth the price of things above their real worth; what is the reason one Tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one shilling; fancy raiseth the price; the difference is rather imaginary than real: so why it should be better to have thousands than hundreds, is, because men fan-

cy it so; if we could fancy a lower condition better*, as having less care in it, and less account, it would be far more eligible; the water that springs out of the rock, drinks as sweet, as if it came out of a golden chalice*; things are as we fancy them.

**Status hominis efficax virtutis gymnasium. Archesilaus*

**Dulcis proficiens aqua sive e Petra fluens, sive in poculo, sive ex mandibulo asini, ad restringendum sitim sufficit: Panis subcinericius, mel agreste possunt te fortem reddere aque accibus splendidissimus. Hyperius.*

them. Even since the fall, the fancy is distempered; *God saw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evil**. Fancy looks through * Gen. 6.5 wrong spectacles; pray that God will sanctifie your fancy; a lower condition would content, if the mind and fancy were set right. *Diogenes* preferred his Cynical life before *Alexanders* royalty; he fancied his little cloyster best. *Fabricius* a poor man; yet despised the gold of King *Pyrrhus*.

—— *Contentus honesto*

Fabricus parvo, spernebat munera Regum.

Sudabatque gravi Consul Serranus aratro. Claud. l. I.

Could we cure a distempered fancy, we might soon conquer a discontented heart.

SECT.

SECT. XIV.

14. Rule. *Consider how little will suffice nature.*

The body is but of small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray for our daily bread; *Parva seges satis est*, Nature is content with a little: $\mu\eta$ διψᾶν, $\mu\eta$ πεινᾶν, not to thirst, nor to starve is enough, saith Gregory Nazianzen; meat and drink is a Christians riches, saith St.

* *Cibus & potus sunt divitiæ Christianorum.*

Hierome*; and the Apostle saith, *Having food and rayment, let us be content.*

—O prodigia rerum

Luxuries, nunquam parvo contenta paratu!

Et quæstorum pelago, terraque ciborum Ambitiosa Fames, & lautæ gloria mensæ!

Discite quam parvo liciat producere vitam,

Et

Et quantum natura petit—

Lucan, l. 4. *Pharsal.*

The Stomach is sooner fill'd than the eye: How quickly would a man be content, if he would study rather to satisfy his *hunger* than his *humour*!

SECT. XV.

15. Rule. *Believe the present Condition is best for us.*

Flesh and blood is not a competent Judge. Surfeited stomachs are for banquetting stuff; but a man that regards his health, is rather for solid food. Vain men fancy such a condition best, and would flourish in their bravery, whereas a wise Christian hath his will melted into Gods will, and thinks it best to be at his finding: God is wise; he knows whether we need Food or Physick; and if we could acquiesce
in

in providence the quarrel would soon be at an end. Oh what a strange creature would man be, if he were what he could wish himself! Be content to be at Gods allowance, God knows which is the fittest pasture to put his sheep in; Sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank pasture may rot. Do I meet with such a cross? God shews me what the world is: he hath no better way to wean me, than by putting me to a step-mother. Doth God stint me in my allowance? he is now dieting me. Do I meet with loss? it is, that God may keep *me* from being lost. Every cross wind shall at last blow me to the right port. Did we believe that condition best which God doth parcel out to us, we should chearfully submit and say, *The lines are fallen in pleasant places.*

SECT.

SECT. XVI.

16. Rule. *Do not too much indulge
the flesh.*

We have taken an oath in Baptism to *forsake the flesh*. The flesh is a worse enemy than the devil; it is a *bosom traitor*: an enemy within is worst. If there were no devil to tempt, the flesh would be another *Eve*, to tempt to the *forbidden fruit*. Oh take heed of giving way to it; whence is all our discontent, but from the fleshly part? The flesh puts us upon the immoderate pursuit of the world; it consults for ease & plenty; and if it be not satisfied, then discontents begin to arise. Oh, let it not have the reins; martyr the flesh; in spiritual things the flesh is a *slug-gard*; in secular things an *Horsleech*, crying, Give, give. The flesh is an
enemy

* Non durum est
quod patimur, sed
molles sumus. Sen.

enemy to suffering *, it will sooner make man a *Courtier* than a *Martyr*. Oh keep it under, put its neck under Christs yoke, stretch and nail it to his Cross; never let a Christian look for *contentment* in his spirit, till there be *confinement* in his flesh.

S E C T. XVII.

17. Rule. *Meditate much on the glory which shall be revealed.*

There are great things laid up in heaven: Though it be sad for the present, yet let us be content in that it will shortly be better; it is but a while, and we shall be with Christ bathing our souls in the fountain of his love; we shall never complain of wants or injuries any more; our cross may be heavy, but one sight of Christ will make us forget all our former sorrows. There are two things should give contentment:

1. That God will make us able to bear

bear our troubles*. God (saith *Chrysostom*) doth like a Lutanist, who will not let the strings of his Lute be too slack, lest it spoil the musick; nor will he suffer them to be too hard stretched or scrwed up, lest they break: So doth God deal with us: he will not let us have too much prosperity, lest this spoil the musick of prayer and repentance; nor yet too much adversity, lest the spirit fail before me, and the souls which he hath made*.

* 1 Cor.

10. 13.

Chrys.

* If. 57. 16

* 1 Pct. 5. 1.

2. When we have suffered a while*, we shall be perfected in glory; the Cross shall be our ladder by which we shall clime up to heaven. Be then content, and the scene will alter. God will ere long turn our water into wine; the hope of this is enough to drive away all distempers from the heart. Blessed be God, it will be better: *We have no continuing City here**, therefore our afflictions cannot

* Heb. 19:

continue. A wise man looks still to

T

the

* Pf. 37.
37.

the end: *The end of the just man is peace**. Methinks the smoothness of the end should make amends for the ruggedness of the way. O eternity, eternity! think often of the *Kingdom prepared*. *David* was advanced from the field to the Throne. First, he held his *Shepherds staff*, and shortly after the *Royal Scepter*. Gods people may be put to hard services here; but God hath chosen them to be *Kings* to sit upon the throne with the Lord Jesus. This being weighed in the balance of faith, would be an excellent means to bring the heart to Contentment.

SECT. XVIII.

18. Rule. *Be much in Prayer.*

The last Rule for Contentment, is, *Be much in Prayer*. Beg of God, that he will work our hearts to this blessed frame, *Is any man afflicted? let him*

* *Ja. 5. 13. pray* *: So, is any man discontented?
let

let him pray, Prayer gives vent. The opening of a vein lets out the bad blood: When the heart is filled with sorrow and disquiet, prayer lets out the bad blood. The key of prayer oyled with tears*, unlocks the heart of all its discontents. Prayer is an holy spell or charm to drive away trouble; Prayer is the unbosoming of the soul, the unloading of all our cares in Gods breast, and this ushers in sweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our spirits, by opening our mind to a friend, we find our heart finely eased and quieted; It is not our *strong resolutions*, but our *strong requests* to God, which must give the heart ease in trouble; by Prayer the strength of Christ is brought into the soul; and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. *Paul* could be in every state content: but that you may not think he was able to do this of himself; he tells you, that though

* *Expletur lachrymis, egeriturque dolor.*

Ἄλλ' ἐπειδὴ μεγαλη-
γρεία τὸ πρῶγμα ἦν ὅρα
πῶς ἐπιλαμβάνεται, τα-
χείως πάντα ἰχύω ἐν τῷ
ἐν δυναμῶντι με Χριστῷ,
ἐκ ἐμὸν τὸ κατίσθωμα,
ἀλλὰ τὸ ὅτι ἰχω δεδωκό-
τε ὅτιν. Chrysost.

he could want and a-
bound, and πάντα ποιῶν
do all things *, yet it
was *through Christ*
strengthening him, Phil.
4. 13. 'Tis the child
that writes, but it is the
Scrivener guides his
hand. St. Paul arrived

at the hardest duty in Religion, *viz.*
Contentment; but the Spirit was his
Pilot, and Christ his *strength*, and
this strength was ushered in by holy
prayer. Prayer is a powerful Ora-
tour. Prayer is an *Oratour* with
God, and an *exorcist* against sin. The
best way is to pray down discontent.
What *Luther* saith of *concupiscence*,
I may say of *Discontent*; prayer is a
sacred Leech, * to suck out the ve-
nom and swelling of this passion.
Prayer composeth the heart, and
brings it into tune. Hath God depriv-
ed you of many comforts? bless
God that he left you the Spirit of
Prayer.

* Oratio
est hirundo
animæ.

Use

Use 6. The last use is of comfort, ^{Use 6.}
or an encouraging word to the con- ^{Consola-}
tented Christian. If there be an hea- ^{tion.}
ven upon earth, thou hast it. O
Christian, thou mayest insult over
thy troubles, and with the *Leviathan*
laugh at the shaking of a spear, *Job* *Job. 41. 29*
41. 29. What shall I say? thou art
a crown to thy profession; thou dost
hold it out to all the world, that
there's virtue enough in Religion to
give the soul contentment. Thou
shewest height of grace. When grace
is *crowning*, it is not so much for us
to be content, but when grace is
conflicting, and meets with crosses,
tentations, agonies; now to be con-
tent, this is a glorious thing in-
deed.

To a contented Christian I shall
say two things for a farewell.

First, God is exceedingly taken
with such a frame of heart. God saith
of a contented Christian, as *David*
once said of *Goliath's* sword, *there is*

none like that, Give it me, 1 Sam. 21. 9. If you would please God, and be *men of his heart*, be contented. It is said that *Rebecca* made *Isaac* savoury meat, such as her husband loved; would you give God *such a dish as he loves*, bring him this of Contentment. The Musician hath many lessons to play; but he hath one above all the rest: There are many lessons of holy Musick that delight God; the lesson of repentance, humility, &c. But this lesson of Contentment is the sweetest lesson that a Believer can play, God hates a froward spirit.

Secondly, the contented Christian shall be no loser. What lost *Job* by his patience? God gave him three times as much as he had before. What lost *Abraham* by his Contentment, he was content to leave his Country at Gods call, the Lord makes a covenant with him, that he would be *his God*, Gen. 17. He
changeth

changeth his name; no more *Abram*, but *Abraham*, the Father of many Nations. God makes his seed as the Stars of Heaven; nay, honours him with this Title, * *The Father of* ^{* Gen. 18.} *the faithful.* The Lord makes ^{17.} known his secrets to him, *shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I will do*; God settles a rich inheritance upon him, that land which was a type of heaven, and afterwards translated him into the blessed Paradise. God will be sure to reward the contented Christian. As our Saviour said in another case to *Nathaniel*, *Because I said I saw thee under the fig-* ^{Joh. 1. 50.} *tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.* So I say, Art thou contented (O Christian) with a little? thou shalt see greater things than these; God will distill the sweet influences of his love into thy soul; he will raise thee up friends; he will bless the oyl in the cruse; and when that is

The INDEX.

Chap. 6. <i>Shewing the nature of Contentment.</i>	36
Contentment is { <i>A divine thing.</i>	<i>ib.</i>
{ <i>An intrinsecal thing.</i>	38
{ <i>An habitual thing.</i>	39
Chap. 7. <i>Containing the reasons which press to holy Contentment</i>	
1. <i>Gods Precept.</i>	41
2. <i>Gods Promise.</i>	42
3. <i>Gods Decree.</i>	43, 44
Chap. 8. <i>The first Use, shewing how a Christian may live comfortably in the midst of troubles.</i>	49
Chap. 9. <i>Use 2. A reproof to the discontented Christian.</i>	52
Chap. 10. <i>Use 3. A swasive to contentment.</i>	58
<i>Several Apologies that discontent makes for it self, answered.</i>	
<i>The first Apology answered.</i>	59
<i>The second Apology answered.</i>	66
<i>The third Apology answered.</i>	72
<i>The fourth Apology answered.</i>	78
<i>The fifth Apology answered.</i>	85
<i>The sixth Apology answered.</i>	90
<i>The</i>	

The INDEX.

<i>The seventh Apology answered.</i>	93
<i>The eighth Apology answered.</i>	96
<i>The ninth Apology answered.</i>	99
<i>The tenth Apology answered.</i>	108
<i>The eleventh Apology answered.</i>	110
<i>The twelfth Apology answered.</i>	114
<i>Chap. II. Divine arguments or motives to Contentment.</i>	118
<i>The first argument, The excellency of Contentment.</i>	118, 119
<i>The second argument, a Christian hath that which may make him content.</i>	142
<i>The third argument, Else we confute our own Prayers.</i>	147
<i>The fourth argument, By Contentment God comes to have his end, and Satan misseth of his end.</i>	147
<i>The fifth argument, Thus a Christian gets a victory over himself.</i>	150
<i>The sixth argument, all cross providences work for our good.</i>	152
<i>The seventh argument, The evil of Discontent.</i>	164

Which

The INDEX.

<i>Which appears</i>	}	<i>The sordidness.</i>	165
<i>in three things</i>	{	<i>The sinfulness.</i>	168
		<i>The simplicity.</i>	178
		<i>The eighth argument, The more a man bath, the less he is satisfied.</i>	183
		<i>The ninth argument, The brevity of life.</i>	184
		<i>The tenth argument, The evils that do attend a prosperous condition.</i>	187
		<i>The eleventh argument, The examples of those who have been eminent for contentation.</i>	196
		<i>The twelfth argument, The present misery and indigence of the godly, is all the hell he shall have.</i>	203
		<i>The thirteenth argument, Not to have a contented mind, is a great judgment.</i>	205
 Chap. 12. Three Cautions laid down.			
<i>Though a Christian should be in every state content, yet</i>			
<i>he must not</i>	{	<i>1. In his natural state.</i>	207
<i>be content</i>	{	<i>2. Where God is dishonoured.</i>	210
		<i>3. With a little grace.</i>	214
			Chap.

The INDEX.

Chap. 13. *The fourth Use, tryal; Shewing the Characters of a contented spirit.*

1. *A contented spirit is a silent spirit* 222

2. *A contented spirit is a chearful spirit.* 223

3. *A contented spirit is a thankful spirit.* 224

4. *To a contented spirit nothing comes amiss.* 226

5. *A contented spirit will not rid himself out of trouble, by running himself into sin.* 230

Chap. 14. *Use 5. Directions propounding several Rules for holy Contentment.* 233

1. *Rule. Advance faith.* 236

2. *Rule. Breathe after assurance.* 239

3. *Rule. Get an humble spirit.* 239

4. *Rule. Keep a clear conscience.* 241

5. *Rule. Learn to deny your selves.* 244

6. *Rule. Labour for an heavenly heart.* 247

7. *Rule. Look not on the dark side of your condition, but the light side.* 248

8. *Rule.*

The INDEX.

8. Rule. *Consider in what a posture you stand here in the world.* 250
9. Rule. *Let not your hopes depend upon extrinsecals.* 252
10. Rule. *Often compare your condition.* 255
11. Rule. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.* 263
12. Rule. *Study the vanity of the creature.* 264
13. Rule. *Get fancy regulated.* 266
14. Rule. *Consider how little will suffice nature.* 268
15. Rule. *Believe the present condition best.* 269
16. Rule. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.* 272
17. Rule. *Meditate much on the Glory to be revealed.* 272
18. Rule. *Be much in Prayer.* 274
- Chap. 15. Use 6. *Comfort to the contented Christian.* 277

FINIS.



on
o
ed
2
i-
5
i-
ur
3
e
4
6
c
8
-
9
e
2
7
2
4
-
7